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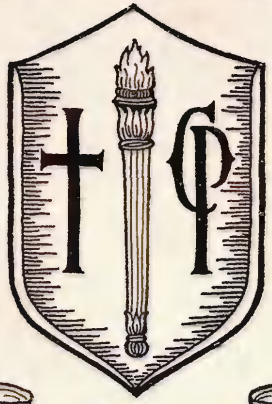

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THE

FALL OF NAPOLEON:

AN HISTORICAL MEMOIR.

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THE

FALL OF NAPOLEON:

AN HISTORICAL MEMOIR.

BY

LIEUT.-COL. J. MITCHELL, H.P.,

Author of "The Life of Wallenstein;" "Thoughts on Tactics," &c., &c.

THAT WHOLE NATIONS BELIEVE, IS NO EVIDENCE OF TRUTH.

Jacobus Dusch.

VOLUME THIRD.

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BOOK FOURTH.

ELBA AND WATERLOO.

THE DESOLATOR DESOLATE,
THE VICTOR OVERTHROWN;
THE ARBITER OF OTHERS' FATE,
A SUPPLIANT FOR HIS OWN!

BYRON.

THE

FALL OF NAPOLEON.

BOOK FOURTH.

ELBA AND WATERLOO.

CHAPTER I.

NAPOLEON'S JOURNEY TO ELBA AND RESIDENCE ON THE ISLAND. GOVERNMENT OF LOUIS XVIII. AND ITS DIFFICULTIES. CONGRESS OF VIENNA. NAPOLEON LANDS AT CANNES: HIS PROGRESS. GENERAL DEFECTION OF THE ARMY: THE KING RETIRES TO GHENT, AND NAPOLEON ENTERS PARIS.

All hopes of returning fortune having vanished, the 20th of April was at last fixed for Napoleon's departure; and at noon "the Fallen Child of Destiny," leaning on the arm of General Belliard, descended the great stair of the antique palace of Fontainbleau. He looked bloated and unwell, but advanced with a quick step into the centre of the Old Guard which was drawn up to receive him. Amid profound silence he addressed them in the following words:—"Soldiers of my Old Guard, I bid you fare-

well! During twenty years I have ever found you in the path of honour and of glory. The Allied powers have armed all Europe against me; part of the army has betrayed its duty, and France has resigned herself to other destinies. With you and the other brave men who have continued faithful to me, I could have maintained a civil war for three years; but France would have been rendered unhappy, and this would have been contrary to the object I have proposed to myself. It was, therefore, my duty to sacrifice all personal interest to the honour of the country; and I have done so. Continue to serve your new sovereign as faithfully as you have served me: do not lament my fate: I could have died, nothing was easier; but I shall always follow the paths of honour, and shall describe the great deeds we have performed together. Farewell, my children! I wish I could press you all to my heart; but I will at least press your eagle." At these words, General Petit advanced with the eagle. Napoleon took him in his arms and kissed the standard; and then saying, "Adieu once more, my old comrades; may this last embrace penetrate the hearts of the brave!" he hurried to his carriage, and drove rapidly from a scene which must be judged of according to the estimate the reader may form of the character of the principal actors engaged.

Four commissioners, one from each of the great Allied powers, General Köller on the part of Austria, General Schouvalow on that of Russia, Colonel Campbell on that of England, and Count Waldburg Truchsess on behalf of Prussia, accompanied the discrowned Emperor on his journey. Count Bertrand attended him as Grand Master of the Palace; other officers of minor note were also of the party; and while fourteen carriages were conveying him and his immediate suite towards Elba, 400 infantry and 150 cavalry, all volunteers from the Old

Guard, were marching in the same direction, to take on them the military duties of the new Empire.

Napoleon had refused an escort of Allied troops, declaring that he had nothing to apprehend from his late subjects; and during the earlier part of his progress, and while the journey lay through districts still partly occupied by French soldiers, he was respectfully received by the authorities, and with occasional shouts of *Vive l'Empereur!* and other tokens of sympathy by the people; and he did not fail to point these out to the commissioners as proofs of his popularity: they were not to be of long duration.

Near Valence he accidentally met Marshal Augereau: both alighted from their carriages, and the Emperor, taking off his hat, advanced and embraced his former comrade, who returned the embrace indeed, but without removing his travelling-cap. After walking together for a quarter of an hour along the road, they parted as they had met; the Emperor again taking off his hat, Augereau remaining covered. The Marshal, on passing, bowed very politely to the commissioners, but cast at the same time a more than contemptuous wave of the hand towards his former sovereign. On the 16th of April Augereau, in acknowledging the Bourbons, had issued a proclamation highly insulting to Napoleon, who had not known, it was said, "to die as a soldier after sacrificing millions to his ambition." An hour after the meeting here described, Napoleon said to General Köller, "I have this instant heard of Augereau's proclamation; had I been sooner acquainted with it, I should have given it him well:"—*Je lui aurais bien lavé la tête.* The General assures us that he had heard of it long before, which is hardly to be doubted, as it was then a week old. But more humiliating scenes were still to follow.

Near Lyons, feelings hostile to the fallen chief had already shown themselves, and these augmented rapidly as the travellers advanced. "Perish the tyrant!" "Down with the butcher of our children!" were the cries now most frequently heard: at one place he beheld himself gibbeted in effigy; and at Avignon, the exertions of the commissioners alone saved him from the fury of the populace. Similar dangers attended him as he proceeded; and the craven fear he evinced could never have been credited had there been any possibility of doubting the authority on which it is related.* The ex-Emperor of France, the leader of mighty armies, actually disguised himself, sometimes as a courier, sometimes as a servant; ordered domestics to smoke in his presence, and invited the commissioners to sing or whistle, that the incensed multitude might not be aware who was in the carriage. At Orgon, the mob paraded his own effigy daubed with blood, and stopped his carriage till they displayed it before his eyes. From Avignon to La Calade, he was grossly insulted in every town and village, and would certainly have been torn to pieces by enraged multitudes, had not the efforts of the commissioners, aided occasionally by local authorities, protected him from their fury. At La Calade the mob surrounded the house, and with loud execrations, demanded his head; and it was only by getting out of a back window, and riding the next post in the disguise of a courier, and with the white cockade in his hat, that he effected his escape.

This reception from the people he had so long governed affected him deeply; he shed tears, and displayed a want of firmness which astonished all who witnessed it. But

* Count Waldburg Truchsess, Itinéraire de Napoléon Bonaparte de Fontainbleau a Frejus.

civil commotions "were never, it is said," so calmly contemplated by Napoleon as the tumults of the field; and Sir Walter Scott tells us, that "the bravest soldier might shudder at a death like that of De Witt." All this, though perfectly true, will not clear Napoleon from the want of firmness evidently displayed on these occasions. In ordinary cases, the bravest soldier who enters the battle-field is not indifferent to danger: he would rather escape death and wounds than otherwise; but he does not, on that account, shrink down to the very craven. The man of nerve, mind and heart—of real bravery in fact, smiles in danger stern and wild; faces death itself unmoved; and if he falls, falls with the dignity that, like Cæsar's mantle, lends a grace to the last throb of life. Exterior apparent calmness in battle is not always a proof of the highest order of courage; for we may well suppose, that of the myriads of soldiers who engage in modern combats, there must necessarily be many who are not endowed with much nerve; and those can have seen little of war, who have not at times observed an evident want of firmness and power of decided action, where there was no attempt to fly or shrink from peril. And where the mass of soldiers can show this description of nerve, the General, and above all the General of a very large army, who is exposed to far less peril, may easily pass muster with a vastly inferior share of animal courage.

"Frederick the Great from Molwitz deigned to run."

At Collin he left the field before the battle was irretrievably lost, and at Soor a feeble moment again came over him; but we know from Berenhorst, the ablest of all the authorities who have spoken of him, that he was never in the least discomposed by the passing sound of cannon-

shot, and several times rode into the very thickest fire of musketry, when he thought circumstances called upon him for peculiar exertions ; and yet he never, perhaps, obtained a fair reputation for bravery. In battle, thousands share danger together, and the comparatively feeble are strengthened in resolve by the presence of the strong and the hardy, animated and encouraged by the fire and example of the valiant and the brave. All these incitements which support the middling character, fall away in scenes like those we have just described. There, danger singles out its individual victim, forces him to stand alone on his own ground, and meet peril front to front : and it is under such circumstances that the higher order of courage is tried ; and when so tried, we see that Napoleon's courage was found wanting.

After the tears shed at La Calade, he spoke on the road of the plans he had formed for attacking the King of Sardinia, and removing Murat from the throne of Naples : schoolboy-like, shedding tears one moment and building airy castles in the next. At Luc he had an interview with his sister Pauline. When this lady, who was not without some elevation of character, first heard of the events at Paris, she exclaimed, " Oh, then, my brother is dead!" On being assured that he was in perfect health, " How!" she said, " could he survive all this ? The last is even the worst news you have brought me."

At Aix, precautions were taken to secure the rest of his journey by detachments of Allied troops ; and on the 27th he arrived at Frejus, the very port where, on his return from Egypt, he had landed fourteen years before, when about to assume the reins of an empire destined for a time to overshadow Europe by its might, and oppress it by the weight of its chains.

A French vessel had been sent round from Toulon,

for the purpose of conveying him to Elba; but there happened to be an English frigate also in the roads, and he preferred sailing under any flag rather than that of the Bourbons. At eleven o'clock on the night of the 28th, he embarked on board the *Undaunted*, under a salute of twenty-one guns. "Adieu, Cæsar and his fortune!" said the Russian Commissioner, as the bark left the land; but the farewell was premature, for the "bastard Cæsar" was to try fortune once more.

Napoleon's equanimity seemed perfectly re-established from the moment he set his foot on the British deck. He conversed affably with Captain Usher and the officers; and by the ease and plainness of his manners, his curiosity regarding the arrangements of the ship, and the warm eulogies which he continued to pronounce on them, and on the character of the English nation, he easily succeeded in making a very favourable impression on the whole crew. The English are naturally a forgiving and warm-hearted people; and a vanquished enemy, arriving as an unarmed guest among them—a fallen Emperor, who had occupied the mightiest throne in Europe, seeking anxiously to please and win golden opinions from all men, could hardly fail to gain the good will of frank and open-hearted sailors. The only person on whom these Imperial blandishments made no impression was Hinton the boatswain: this shrewd old tar was not so easily gained over as his comrades, and usually growled out the homely phrase "Humbug," in reply to all the fine speeches made in the Emperor's praise. Saving this hard veteran, the language of the forecastle declared Bonaparte to be "a very good fellow after all." And when, on leaving the ship, he caused some 200 *Napoleons* to be distributed among the sailors, even Hinton relented; and in returning thanks for the

crew, "wished his honour long life, and better luck next time."

On the 4th May, the Emperor came in sight of his new dominions, and went on shore in disguise the same evening, to ascertain for himself whether the feelings of the Elbese at all resembled those of the Provençals. Finding that, on the contrary, the people considered his residence as likely to increase the prosperity of their island, he returned on board, and at noon next day made his public entrance into the town of Porto Ferrajo amidst all possible demonstrations of welcome and respect.

The Island of Elba, to the limits of which Napoleon's empire was now reduced, is situated on the coast of Tuscany, and has a circumference of sixty miles. The country is mountainous, romantic in appearance, and the air, except in the neighbourhood of the salt marshes, considered pure and healthy. It produces little grain; but exports some wine and a considerable quantity of iron ore; minerals forming the principal wealth of the island.

The ex-Emperor entered at first with all possible zeal on the administration of his new dominions. "I am politically dead to Europe," he said; "let me do all I can for Elba:" and certainly no small sovereignty was ever so much governed in so short a time. In less than three weeks he had explored every corner of the island, and projected more improvements than a single life could have completed. He even extended his empire by sending some twenty soldiers to take possession of a small adjacent island, hitherto left unoccupied for fear of Corsairs: observing, at the same time, that "Europe would say he had already made a conquest." He established four different residences at different corners

of Elba, and was continually in motion from one to another of them. Wherever he was, in houses neither so large nor so well furnished as many English gentlemen are used to inhabit, the etiquette of the Tuileries was maintained with all practicable strictness. And his few hundred veterans were as frequently and as formally reviewed as if they had been the armies of Austerlitz and Moscow.

His presence, however, gave a strong stimulus to the trade and navigation of the island. The harbour of Porto Ferrajo was crowded with vessels from the opposite coast of Italy, and the new flag of Elba spangled with bees, already began to be known on the Mediterranean. Numerous strangers, and among them many Englishmen of rank, also visited the island. They were always received with great courtesy by the Emperor, who, on such occasions, spoke very freely of his former government; and in conversation palliated rather than denied the scheme of poisoning the sick, the massacre of Jaffa, and the murder of the Duke d'Enghien. Of himself he always spoke as of one who was politically dead; declaring, that he intended to devote himself exclusively to literature and science; though there is not the least appearance that he ever paid the slightest attention to either subject during his ten months' stay at Elba. Of the English character he frequently expressed the greatest admiration. "The English are the only people in the world," he said; "the rest are only so many populaces. I tried to elevate the French to your level of sentiment, and failing to do so, fell of course."

He was, more from political motives, perhaps, than from attachment to Marie Louise, greatly displeased with the Emperor of Austria for having caused his separation from his wife and child, and often reproached

General Köller with the conduct of his government. The commissioner could only parry these attacks, by declaring, what indeed was perfectly true, that the separation was owing entirely to the Empress's own desire; hinting sometimes that Napoleon's anxiety for her return resulted from other rather than motives of conjugal affection; insinuations to which his irregularities gave sufficient colouring.

These differences did not, however, prevent him from expressing great friendship for the General; and when the latter, who was a shrewd and able man, came to take his final leave, the parting between them was, says Sir Walter Scott, "quite pathetic on the Emperor's side. He wept as he embraced the General, and entreated him to obtain, if possible, his reunion with his wife and child: called him the preserver of his life; regretted his poverty, which prevented his bestowing on him some valuable token of remembrance; finally, folding the Austrian in his arms, he held him there for some time, repeating expressions of the warmest attachment." This sensibility existed all upon one side; for an English gentleman who witnessed the scene, afterwards asked Köller what he was thinking of while locked in the Emperor's embrace,—"Of Judas Iscariot," answered the witty Austrian.

As time wore, it became evident, that Napoleon's mind wanted the calmness which could enable him to rest upon his own resources. The ex-Emperor was essentially, indeed, a man of action, and not of thought; and his activity had more the character of restlessness than of the persevering efforts to carry great, clear and well-defined projects into rapid execution. Thrown into a subordinate situation, he would have been a troublesome landlord meddling with his tenants, or a martinet

Colonel, drilling and parading his troops without object from morning to night. Hitherto crowns and sceptres had been his playthings, and the astonishment of the great nations of the earth had supplied food for his vanity: now the Isle of Elba was to be his stage, its police and fiscal regulations were to engross the interest which had for years been bestowed only on the command of armies and the government of empires; and the building of villas was to satisfy the craving for excitement so long fed by the raising and remodelling of thrones—

> "The triumph and the vanity,
> The rapture of the strife,
> The earthquake voice of victory
> To him the breath of life;
> The sword, the sceptre, and the sway,
> That man seemed born but to obey"—

were now all quelled, and Napoleon was nothing without them. He could not cultivate his garden like Dioclesian, nor follow the example of Frederick II., who ended his days in the philosophic retreat of Sans-Souci, dreading the very name of war. When the first novelty of his island reign was over, when he had explored every corner of his new empire, and projected improvements that far exceeded his pecuniary means, he became dejected, moody, listless and comparatively difficult of access.

The want of money also began to press upon him, and checked his architectural plans and other improvements. The taxes were consequently augmented; and as the islanders were poor and unable to pay the new imposts, troops were quartered on the refractory, as had been usual in conquered countries, and the new ruler's popu-

larity was soon on the decline. Had the French government paid his pension in advance, or quarterly as it fell due, it would still have borne a slender proportion to the demands of his extravagant expenditure. But he received no money whatever from the Bourbon Court; and his complaints on this head were most unjustly and unwisely neglected. Sir Neil Campbell represented to the British government the danger of leaving Napoleon exposed to these difficulties; and Lord Castlereagh very properly called the attention of the French Cabinet to the consequences that might result; but they treated the matter lightly, and declared the Emperor's pension was not due till the end of the year; by which time he had already taken steps to pay himself.

As the winter drew towards an end, Sir Neil Campbell, who was now the only commissioner at Elba, saw clearly that some enterprise was in agitation, and warned the government in consequence. This officer, having no acknowledged diplomatic character, was gradually excluded from the presence of the Emperor, who shrouded himself within forms of etiquette; but he was not able to deceive Sir Neil by these contrivances. Porto Ferrajo resembled a large barrack filled with military, *gens d'armes*, police-officers; refugees of every nation, expectants and dependants upon the court, domestics and adventurers, all connected with the Emperor, holding or anticipating some benefit at his hands. Suspicious characters appeared and disappeared again; and rumours of every kind, says Sir Walter Scott, were buzzed about through this miscellaneous crowd, "thick as motes in sunshine." But though these appearances may have rendered it evident that some project was agitated at Elba, nothing has yet transpired to show that they were connected with any plot or conspiracy

formed for the Emperor's recall, either in France or Italy. His friends laboured, no doubt, to bring about such a result; and by a strange fatality, his enemies also lent their best efforts to the same cause.

The events recorded in our previous Book had placed Louis XVIII. on the throne of France. The Bourbons, nearly forgotten by the nation, were hailed as the harbingers of peace, the blessings of which an entire generation had only known by name; and, looked upon as messengers destined to free the country from the iron yoke of Napoleon, from the countless evils his despotic ambition had brought upon a suffering and bleeding land, they had been received with enthusiasm. To the ardent imagination of the people, the return of their ancient monarchs was to be a return of the Age of Gold, and the extravagance of the expectations tended naturally to augment the disappointments certain to result from such high-flown anticipations.

The King, though advanced in years, and infirm in person, wanted not some of the qualities essentially calculated to gain popularity with those who approached him. He was a scholar, a man of good talents, and his manners were pleasing and not without dignity; and he possessed, above all, the rare gift—a gift that may be termed invaluable to Princes—of making flattering, appropriate and often witty remarks. These advantages did not fail to leave a favourable impression on the higher classes of society, but their influence could not extend farther; and the lower orders, who only saw the King pass in his carriage, beheld a gross and helpless old man, dressed in a style that to them appeared ridiculous. But if the Parisians had no affection for their new Sovereign, they certainly had no dislike to him. His easy affability, and the many good sayings ascribed

to him, and which circulated rapidly among the multitude, tended in some degree to counteract the effects of his appearance, and contrasted besides with the manners of the other branches of the family, who very soon became obnoxious to all except the members of the ultra-Royalist party. The difficulties the new government had to contend with the moment the first enthusiasm had evaporated, were of a more serious nature, however, than any which could result from the unpopular manners of some of the princes.

Louis XVIII. had brought peace along with him; but its beneficial effects could not be instantly felt; whereas, the thousands thrown out of employment by the termination of the war, were immediate sufferers by the change, and belonged besides to the active, restless, and daring part of the population; whilst those most likely to profit by the restoration of tranquillity,—merchants, traders, and agriculturists,—belonged to the sedentary and less noisy classes. A clamour was soon, therefore, raised against the peace, which had been purchased by the surrender of all the conquests made during the Revolution, and was termed humiliating to France, and charged as a crime against the monarch; though the Allies, anxious to recommend him to his new subjects, had granted him more favourable terms than those Napoleon had offered to accept. They had also, with a degree of liberality bordering almost on the romantic, allowed France to retain the pictures, statues, antiques and other treasures of art, which Napoleon's armies had carried away from the capitals of plundered Europe. England having no sacrifices of this nature to make, had restored all the French colonies, with the exception of St Lucie and the Mauritius, an excess of generosity that

was little deserved, considering how little it has been appreciated.

Louis had been recalled by a decree of the Senate, which gave France a constitutional charter and confirmed the rights of all who had obtained titles, dignities and property, by the events of the Revolution. The King, though he proceeded to France on this invitation, dated his first act in the twentieth year of his reign; and issued a charter conferring, as from his own free will, every privilege the Senate had claimed for themselves and the nation. This commencement gave offence to the Republicans and so-called patriots, who, to escape from the despotism of Napoleon, had aided the recall of the Bourbons, and were displeased to see the King take his stand on a higher and more independent ground than they had expected. These men looked upon his conduct as a return to the doctrine of divine right, which they abhorred and had ever resisted; and asked why, if all their privileges were only the gift of the King, they might not on any tempting occasion be withdrawn by the same authority? The millions of proprietors who held national domains, were alarmed when they found that, according to the royal declaration, there had been no legitimate government in France since the death of Louis XVI., a circumstance that necessarily left the validity of their acquisitions altogether uncertain.

The King and the government used all their efforts, indeed, to allay the fears of these numerous and powerful classes; but the conduct of influential courtiers and ultra-Royalists, caused the sincerity of these regal assurances to be entirely disbelieved. The clergy were especially blamed. The Revolution had not only deprived them of their possessions, but of their influence also; for

the people, demoralized by the great national convulsion which had rested so mainly on infidelity for support, had become as indifferent to religion as to its ministers. The clergy, oppressed by Napoleon, had submitted tranquilly to his rude military government; but now under a King sincerely attached to the Catholic Church, they attempted to regain their influence by his aid, by power in fact, and thus injured the royal cause as well as their own: for in the efforts made to secure the due observance of the Sabbath and restore all the pompous rites of the Catholic Church, many saw only a wish to restore the reign of antiquated and, as they considered, ridiculous superstitions; while others looked upon them as first steps taken by the obnoxious clergy to recover not only their former influence but their possessions also. "Napoleon," says Capefigue, "had accustomed the French to Counts and Nobles, but their hatred of Priests remained unchanged:" the assertion is certainly not very complimentary to the people, but unfortunately we fear too just.

The members of the ancient nobility were also blamed. They were naturally the personal friends and companions of the restored Princes; and their illustrious names and superior manners could not fail to excite unpleasant feelings among the new-made Dukes and Counts of the Imperial régime. Reduced to poverty by their attachment to the royal cause, they saw their splendid possessions in the hands of the Revolutionists, and could hardly fail to be dissatisfied, to complain, and to threaten a counter-revolution, or re-action as it was termed. The ladies of this class contributed greatly to render the Royalists unpopular, by treating the wives and daughters of Napoleon's peers and marshals with a degree of

hauteur, which could not fail to be offensive; and female influence, every where considerable, is particularly so in France.

Against the court as distinct from the King and the government, the clergy and the ancient nobility, stood the Bonapartists and the so-called patriots,—a body composed of all shades of Republicans, from Jacobins to Constitutionalists. These opposition parties still hated each other as cordially as they had done under the Imperial régime; but were now united in purpose by their mutual enmity of the Bourbons.

The freedom of debate and the liberty of the press so injudiciously granted by the new charter, were immediately used as weapons against the very authority by which they had been conferred. We purposely say injudiciously granted: for it was surely a most extravagant mistake to suppose, that a nation in which so many fierce passions were yet in full activity, could make a beneficial, or any but a mischievous use of such valuable privileges—of powers so novel and extensive—acting as quickly and formidably for evil, when not skilfully guarded against by previous preparation, as progressively for good when wisely applied.

None of the opposition factions—for they were little more—possessed much influence with the people, who were in general not averse to the royal government, had not the ceaseless agitation of parties prevented confidence from being fully established. The court, the clergy, and the nobles, strove to drive the King and his government into the adoption of violent counter-revolutionary measures; while the opposition excited the nation against their rulers by exaggerating the faults committed, and by spreading groundless alarm regarding the safety of the revolutionary acquisitions.

Between these fierce and adverse parties, the King attempted to steer a middle course: by wishing to please both, he failed to please either; and not having the army on his side, fell before the efforts of factions possessing neither popularity nor influence, and having no support in the nation beyond what they derived from the aid of the troops.

The King was extremely anxious to conciliate the affections of the soldiery, and maintained a more numerous army than the reduced state of the finances seemed to warrant. To support the large military establishment, it became necessary to continue the obnoxious tax called the *droits réunis*, the remission of which had been promised, and the continuance of which displeased the people, while the result did little to satisfy the army. The Imperial Guard were retained on their old establishment, and the Legion of Honour confirmed in all its privileges and advantages. The Marshals and higher officers, flattered by the attention paid them, were easily gained to the royal cause; and had they possessed any real influence with the troops, the army would no doubt have remained faithful to their duty. But these officers exercised no power in fact over the minds of the soldiers, and had no authority beyond what they derived from the ordinary rules of discipline; which once disregarded, left them altogether powerless. Private soldiers and officers of high rank stand so widely apart in their respective stations, that the causes which influence the feelings and opinions of the one class may not even reach to the other; and it is a great error, often fallen into by governments, to suppose that they command the attachment and fidelity of the troops, merely because they are certain of the loyalty of the officers: it is only by having at the head of the troops, officers who by

individual qualities can rule the will of their inferiors, that the implicit obedience of soldiers can be depended upon in times of anarchy and discord. At the commencement of the French Revolution, every officer remained faithful to the King; but not a single soldier pulled a trigger in the royal cause: and here the inferiors, instead of being swayed and influenced by their superiors, forced Generals and Marshals to follow them in their wild career of treason and rebellion.

The soldiers and inferior officers were extremely dissatisfied with the new order of things; and their want of loyalty, the result of checked ambition, has been too generally ascribed to government measures, which the instigations only of evil-designing persons could augment to real grievances, or just causes of disaffection. The *tricolor* was supplanted by the white cockade, and the eagles of Napoleon by the Bourbon standard: and the French soldiers were made to fancy themselves injured and insulted because they were obliged to wear the colours of the King of France—the colours that Gaston, Du Guesclin, Bayard and Henry IV. had worn; and were called upon to serve under the white banner to which they had sworn allegiance!

Notwithstanding the large force maintained with a view of gratifying the troops, vast reductions had to be made from the countless hosts of the empire; and a number of officers were placed on half-pay, and others pensioned off altogether; and in some cases these were replaced by members of the old nobility. Both reductions and appointments caused discontent, as the officers of Napoleon's army fancied they were to be gradually superseded by those who had never shared in the glories of the empire. In all ranks there were men of high talents, and daring enterprise, brought up under the

Imperial system,—a system which opened the road to rapid promotion, wealth, and dignities; many were already within reach of brilliant prizes, others following quickly in the dazzling career, when the restoration of peace cut short, or clouded at least, their most splendid anticipations. All these men were naturally hostile to the Bourbons.

But the most rancorous enemies of the restored dynasty were the liberated prisoners of war, the troops who had formed the garrisons of the surrendered fortresses, and above all the *douaniers* and civil *employés*, —the blood-suckers of Europe,—who were swept back into France by the swelling tide of victory, that had carried the Allies to Paris. It is said that, soldiers and civilians, they amounted in all to nearly half a million of men; and though the number may, perhaps, be exaggerated, they certainly formed so many firebrands cast in upon their unhappy country, as if on purpose to spread mischief and desolation around. The writer speaks here from some personal observation; and confesses his inability to convey to the reader any idea of the bitter hatred which animated the officers and civil functionaries against the royal government.*

* The writer of this Memoir, then on the Quarter-Master-General's staff, was, in the course of duty, called upon to superintend the march of many of these troops through some of the British cantonments in Flanders, and had ample opportunity for observation. "What is to become of us? what is to be done with the army?" were in general the first questions asked, after the ordinary service communications had passed. As it was the author's duty to conciliate, rather than to discuss political points, he always expressed his conviction "that the army would be well treated, and that the truly French heart of the king, the pride he was known to take in the glory of the national arms, his sense of what was due to the interest of the country, would make him cherish men who had performe so mdany brilliant actions," &c., &c. These sort of speeches, though usually well received, and

The returned prisoners complained of having been harshly treated; they had personal wrongs to avenge, and all were anxious to efface the stain which late defeats had brought upon their country's arms. Nor could the tranquil life of home-quarters satisfy men, long and unfortunately habituated to the plundering, adventurous, and licentious life of Napoleon's soldiers; accustomed to lord it over the citizens of so many conquered countries. These causes, especially the last, enabled agitators to work on the minds of the troops, and to make them believe that their interest as well as the honour of France, called alike for the return of the Emperor.

The long and eventful reign of Napoleon had raised a number of civilians also to high rank, wealth, and influence; and though these persons were in general well received at Court, they soon perceived that their sphere of action was closed, that they had little chance of employment under the Bourbons. Their ambition thus checked, they became like officers similarly situated,

sometimes repaid in similar coin, did not, and could not, remove the apprehensions generally entertained of being superseded by the emigrants, or experiencing even some worse fate. Nor were the soldiers without fears; and on several occasions parties of them, evidently deputed by the rest, called upon the author to ask what he thought would be done with them, and whether they would not be sent to St Domingo. These questions had of course to be answered in the same style as the others, and the author could only assert his firm belief, "that they would be treated as brave soldiers deserved to be; and that instead of making war on their neighbours, they would only have to make love to *les jolies Françaises*, certainly a much pleasanter occupation." Replies of this kind, if they tended to nothing more, seemed to awaken a friendly feeling on the part of the querists, and many asked if they could not be received into the British army. Even officers made the same inquiry; expressing a ready wish to serve in our Indian or Colonial corps.

dissatisfied with the new government, and joined their efforts to those of the army. Songs and pamphlets, containing satires against the royal family, panegyrics on Napoleon, who was usually styled *Le petit Caporal, or Père la Violette*, were distributed among the troops; half-pay officers, and pensioned soldiers, made themselves the ready agents of disaffection; and in Paris the brilliant *salons* of the Countess de St Leu—formerly Hortense Beauharnais, Queen of Holland—and of Madame Hamelin, became the head-quarters of the Bonapartists, and of the most active correspondents of the exiled Emperor and of the King of Naples. And if no actual conspiracy to recall Napoleon was ever formed, it is certain at least that there existed a numerous society who strove anxiously to effect his restoration. Messengers passed frequently between Paris, Elba and Naples; for Murat, alarmed by the proceedings of the Congress of Vienna, had become reconciled to his brother-in-law, and was now in frequent and friendly communication with him.

This Congress intended to reconcile so many jarring interests, and heal the numerous wounds inflicted on Europe by the results of the French Revolution, had met at Vienna in September 1814. It was a brilliant assemblage: there were present the Emperors of Austria and Russia, the Kings of Prussia, Denmark, Würtemberg and Bavaria, besides a number of other princes, together with ministers of all the Christian States of Europe. This senate of nations represented the whole force of the Christian world: and since the great Congress of Münster which, in the seventeenth century, closed the long series of wars that arose out of the Reformation, no assembly of statesmen had ever been intrusted with the performance of a task so important

to the happiness of millions, as the one which now devolved on the peers and princes assembled in the Austrian capital. The enthusiasm of the liberated nations —of all to whom peace had been restored after so many years of discord—was at its height; the people of Britain were in a delirium of joy; and the anticipations of prosperity expected to result from the heavy sacrifices made in the cause of freedom and European independence, far exceeded any which diplomatic efforts could realize. The many interests formed and fostered by long years of war and anarchy, were endangered and threatened with ruin; the passions and ambitious hopes awakened under a long established system of spoil, conquest and corruption, were to be checked and forced back in bitterness on the hearts which had nourished them; justice, however honestly administered, was certain, therefore, to excite discontent: and unfortunately the acts of Congress had not always the firm plea of justice to rest upon.

The history of this Congress, of which the Prince de Ligne said, "that it danced but did not advance," belongs not to our subject: its masks, balls, revels, gaieties and negotiations, its political intrigues and love intrigues are foreign to our object, so that few only of its principal enactments require to be stated here.

Though the difficulties the Congress had to encounter were certainly very great, it must be allowed that many wise measures resulted from its deliberations. The kingdom of the Netherlands was formed by the union of Holland and Belgium, an arrangement by which both countries would have been greatly benefited had they continued under the same government. Piedmont, with the addition of Genoa and the Riviera, was restored to its legitimate sovereign, the King of Sardinia. Aus-

tria recovered Lombardy, Venice, Illyria and Dalmatia; Prussia, besides her former possessions, obtained a part of Saxony and the Rhineland provinces; and Sweden was rewarded for the slender aid lent against Napoleon, by the valuable but iniquitous acquisition of Norway.

A Congress which, however unwillingly perhaps, could lend the sanction of its authority to the rapacity displayed in this last transaction, was certain to forfeit, in a great measure, the sympathies of Europe, and to weaken its power of resisting other claims of an equally unjustifiable character. Talleyrand, the Ambassador of Louis XVIII., instigated, it is said, by the desire to gain favour with the elder branch of the house of Bourbon, and to secure the revenues of his valuable Duchy of Benevento, had from the first solicited a declaration against Murat, with whom both England and Austria had formed treaties, and who was, in fact, a member of the alliance. This demand, whatever Talleyrand's motives may have been, proved nearly ruinous to the cause of his new sovereign; for Murat, informed of the intrigues carried on against him, began to arm, and demanded a free passage for 80,000 men through Lombardy; and though this was, of course, refused, the French prepared to resist the threatened attack, and assembled about 30,000 men in Provence and the southern provinces: and thus collected the very army which ultimately carried Napoleon in triumph to Paris.

If France demanded the deposition of Murat and the restitution of Naples to its legitimate sovereign—a breach of faith on the part of the Allies—Russia and Prussia advanced claims completely at variance with the principles which had called Europe to arms, and crowned its efforts with success. These governments followed the ambitious conduct of Napoleon, and thus

lost to the Allies the confidence which, from feelings of gratitude, so many liberated nations were willing to place in their generosity and honour. Prussia demanded the kingdom of Saxony, conquered during the war, and then in possession of her troops; Russia, as the reward of her exertions, claimed the Duchy of Warsaw—all that remained of the unhappy kingdom of Poland—then covered by her armies. Austria, England, and France, resisted these unjustifiable demands; and as the negotiations were taking an unfavourable turn, they entered into a secret treaty for the purpose of resisting the pretensions of the two Northern Powers.*

The political horizon, but lately cleared of the storm-charged cloud which had overshadowed the earth, and hurled so many fatal thunderbolts upon Europe, was again darkening. The Grand Duke Constantine having halted the Russian armies in Poland, took, in the name of the Czar, military possession of the kingdom: thus in some measure defying confederated Europe to liberate the unhappy land from the grasp of the Muscovite eagle. In Prussia the Landwehrs and volunteers remained embodied; Austria improved her armaments; and numerous levies were raised in Hanover, Brunswick, and other states of the German confederation; the Allies seemed on the verge of turning their arms against each other, when, on the 11th March 1815, news arrived that Napoleon had landed in the Gulf of Juan; and the reappearance on the scene of this common enemy instantly quelled every symptom of discord, and again united all parties in the firm resolve to oppose the man whose turbulent ambition had been too successfully imitated by

* "This is the true line of policy to be adopted towards the North," said Napoleon, when he afterwards read this treaty; "it is the very line which I ought to have followed."

the most inveterate of his foes. Destined by fate to be everywhere the enemy of freedom, Napoleon destroyed by his landing the last hope of national independence left to unhappy Poland, in the efforts of the parties to the secret treaty of Vienna. One half of Saxony was still saved from the grasp of Prussia ; but Poland disappeared from the list of nations ; the town of Cracow alone escaped the fangs of the Russian eagle : a speck of nominal freedom amid the dreary wilderness of surrounding servitude : a temple in the desert, rising like the structures on the plain of Pæstum above the rank weeds of desolation, to mark the lands where a brave and noble people once held sway.

Napoleon, moody and dissatisfied at Elba, had not remained ignorant of the discontent that was spreading in France, and of the feelings still entertained in his favour by the troops. He was also, it is said, informed of its being the intention of Congress to remove him to St Helena or St Lucie. That some measure of this nature may have been suggested by France, is more than probable ; but it was not entertained by the Allies, and could never, without a direct breach of faith, have been sanctioned by the sovereigns who were parties to the treaty of Fontainbleau. The report that such an act of treachery had been contemplated, was no doubt circulated to justify the extravagant enterprise of which we have now to speak.

It was on the evening of the 26th February 1815, that Napoleon, leaving a ball given by his sister Pauline, embarked on board the *Inconstant*, a sloop of war carrying twenty-six guns. "The die is cast," he said, as he stepped on the deck, and gave the signal of departure to his squadron, consisting of seven small vessels in which

about a thousand men destined for the conquest of a mighty kingdom were embarked. Bertrand and Drouet alone knew the destination of the armament; but when the flotilla was clear of the harbour, he told his Guards that they were going to France, "to Paris:" he was answered with the old war-cry of *Vive l'Empereur!*— the fatal shout which had so often tolled the knell of thousands, and was again destined to become the dirge of myriads.

Norvins tells us that Napoleon's departure from Elba was the result of a sudden resolution, a sort of inspiration indeed, and not of any preconcerted plan or arrangement entered into with other parties: and there is reason to believe that the Princess Pauline and the King of Naples were the only persons in the secret of the expedition.

It is sufficiently evident, indeed, that little reflection, or judgment at least, had been employed in projecting this wild and faithless enterprise, which seemed to hold out no prospect but that of ruin to the adventurer. The sovereigns were still assembled at Vienna; their armies were within call; so that, however successful Napoleon might be in France, there would be no means of resisting the efforts of combined Europe certain of being soon directed against the usurper. It is true, that France had withstood the first coalition at the commencement of the Revolution; but times and circumstances were changed. Under the Convention, the people fought in the anticipation of freedom; and disappointed in their expectation of deriving tangible benefits from victory, their enthusiasm was exhausted, and was not likely to rekindle in favour of the iron despotism, the fall of which had so lately been hailed with delight from one extremity of the empire to the other. The armies of

the first coalition, vanquished by the Republicans, were besides feeble in numbers, and conducted without energy or concert.

The allied masses, on the other hand, which had so lately advanced to Paris, were composed of corps and divisions equal in strength to whole armies of the early campaigns; the soldiers were tried and proved, accustomed to victory and led by bold and confident officers, who had already found their way to the capital of France; and in war, what men have done once, they feel that they can do again. It is not easy to see, therefore, on what rational ground a successful termination of the undertaking could be anticipated. Many will say, perhaps, that the certain dangers of the enterprise evince at least the high courage of the leader who so boldly ventured upon it; but even this seems doubtful: for there are thousands ready to challenge distant danger, to engage in perilous undertakings, who yet shrink from the struggle, when the adversary has to be closed with in firm and desperate grasp. And we shall probably find that Napoleon terminated the adventure in a manner that corresponded very indifferently with the apparent boldness of the attack.

As the wind was light and baffling, the squadron made at first but little progress, and Napoleon confined himself to his cabin, and dictated the proclamations afterwards circulated through France. On the evening of the 27th, some danger was experienced: a French frigate and sloop of war were observed at a distance; the former stood on her course, but the latter, the *Zephyr* brig, came within hail, and the Captain having learned that they were from Elba, inquired how the Emperor was: "*Il se porte à merveille,*" replied Napoleon himself, who had made the soldiers lie flat upon deck to escape ob-

servation. This was the only peril encountered during the voyage, and at three o'clock in the afternoon of the 1st March, the flotilla anchored in the Gulf of Juan, when the small and adventurous host was immediately landed. Their first camp was in an olive grove, which Napoleon declared to be a fortunate omen, but their first enterprise had a more threatening appearance. Twenty-five grenadiers of the Guard, sent to gain the garrison of Antibes for the Imperial cause, were arrested and thrown into prison; a second party found the gates locked, and having attempted to read Napoleon's proclamation under the walls, saw the guns pointed against them, and were ordered to depart on pain of being instantly fired upon.

This check at the very outset of the expedition alarmed the soldiers and discomposed the Emperor; but, as he had himself said, the "die was cast," and retreat was impossible, for the asylum of Elba would no longer have been respected; it was only in victory that safety could now be found; and at three o'clock in the morning the small band commenced their march, taking the mountain road by Gap towards Grenoble.

No opposition of any kind was encountered. At first the peasantry looked on with perfect indifference. In Dauphiné, the cradle of the Revolution, shouts of *Vive l'Empereur!* were occasionally heard, but the higher classes, the clergy and authorities, all kept aloof, nor did a single man of the lower class join the adventurer. Well aware how unpopular the Imperial régime had been, Napoleon during his march acted the patriot, spoke the language of the Republic, and assumed the character of the very party he had so bitterly persecuted during his reign. He now declared that he only came to liberate the people from the yoke of the priests, and

save them from the feudal tyranny which the Bourbons intended to restore. His object he said was, to abolish the *droits réunis;* to give security to the holders of national domains; and confer equal rights on all men: as to himself, he intended to be only the first citizen of France. Of war he repeated that he was completely tired, and assured every one that there should be no more conscriptions. He also spread the report that he was in alliance with Austria and Naples, which were marching armies to his aid, and that England had sanctioned his return, or how else could he have escaped from an island surrounded by her navy?

At Gap, he printed the proclamations prepared on board the *Inconstant*,—the one addressed to the army, the other to the people. The former, the most important, was in the following words:—

"Soldiers! we have not been beaten! Two men, raised from our ranks"—Marmont and Augereau—"betrayed our laurels, their country, their prince and their benefactor. In my exile I have heard your voice. I have arrived once more among you, despite all obstacles and all perils. We ought to forget that we have been the masters of the world, but we ought never to suffer foreign interference in our affairs. Who dares pretend to be master over us? Take again the eagles which you followed at Ulm, at Austerlitz, at Jena, at Montmirail. Come and range yourselves under the banners of your old chief. Victory shall march at the charging-step. The eagle, with the national colours, shall fly from steeple to steeple—on to the towers of Notre Dame! In your old age, surrounded and honoured by your fellow-citizens, you shall be heard with respect when you recount your high deeds. You shall then say with pride—I also was one of that great army which entered

twice within the walls of Vienna, which took Rome, and Berlin, and Madrid, and Moscow, and which delivered Paris from the stain imprinted on it by domestic treason, and the occupation of strangers!"

If these declarations imposed upon the ignorant peasantry, they brought, however, no assistance; and the adventurers had advanced nearly a hundred miles into the country, without being joined by a friend or opposed by an enemy.

The most absolute feebleness everywhere marked the conduct of the authorities; and it was only at Sisteron that the mayor attempted to sound the tocsin, and assemble the people for resistance, when the sudden arrival of General Cambronne, at the head of his Grenadiers, arrested even this solitary act of duty and loyalty.

After leaving this hamlet, on the evening of the 7th, the invaders came unexpectedly on a battalion of royal troops, detached from the garrison of Grenoble to oppose their progress. But these soldiers, though they refused to parley, offered no resistance, and fell back to take up a position—thus already forsaking, in some measure, the cause they were sent to defend. It was the decisive moment, as all felt that the resistance or defection of the first regiment would give the general impulse, and be followed by the whole army. Napoleon hurried to the front, and sent forward an officer to parley; but without success. "We have been deceived," he said to Bertrand; "but no matter now,—forward:" then throwing open his grey surtout, and displaying the star of the Legion of Honour, he advanced towards the opposite ranks,—"Comrades," he said, "do you know me again? Soldiers, do you know your General? If there is one among you who desires to kill his Emperor, let him do it now, here I am!" The soldiers, who had not fired

upon his troops, were not likely to fire upon himself, replied with loud shouts of *Vive l'Empereur !* and instantly surrounded him with enthusiastic demonstrations of welcome.

The accounts of this rather theatrical scene, which has furnished subjects for painters and poets, are taken altogether from Bonapartist writers, all addicted to exaggeration, but who alone had opportunities of describing it from personal observation. In the salons of Paris it was not unusual, in 1815, to hear the event related in the following manner. When the king's troops, it was then said, fell back to take up their unfortunate position, the rear-sections, or stragglers perhaps, were overtaken by the leading men of Cambronne's party, who entered into conversation with them. Napoleon, informed of the circumstance, hastened to the front: "Here is the Emperor," shouted the Grenadiers, "cheer him, comrades, cheer him!"—and the impulse thus given, the shout of "Vive l'Empereur" spread along the whole column, the men instantly halting, and turning round to join their former commander. The result is the same; but the scene thus described is not so theatrical, and does not place Napoleon in so prominent a manner on the foreground of the picture.

The officers who commanded the Royal troops on this occasion have not been named, and it is very certain that owing either to a want of energy or good will, they betrayed their trust before the troops went over. Their falling back without resistance, allowing their men to mingle and converse with those they were sent to oppose, or—if this version is incorrect—allowing not only an adversary, but Napoleon himself, to come up and harangue their soldiers for seditious purposes, without personally stepping forward and preventing him, sword in hand, if

necessary,—this was so gross and barefaced a deviation from duty, that we can hardly look upon it as any thing short of premeditated treason. What should we think of an officer who, in ordinary warfare, would permit an enemy to come up and address his troops for the avowed purpose of making them unfaithful to their duty? There were foreign regiments both in the French and English armies during the Peninsular War; but would any French or English officer have allowed a countryman of any of these foreigners to advance from the opposite ranks, and invite his compatriots to desert their colours? And if criminal in ordinary warfare, would not such conduct be doubly criminal in civil war, or times of civil discord?

We may be told that the officers had no power to prevent the soldiers from listening to Napoleon; and this may be perfectly true; but had any attempt been made to prevent them, the scene described by historians must have happened in a different manner altogether: in that case the officers would have advanced to meet Napoleon as officers should have done, and would not have remained stationary in their ranks, as if purposely drawn up to be harangued by their former commander. It is perfectly evident, therefore, that the theatrical scene of the Bonapartist writers was either a mere piece of acting, the result of previous arrangement with the officers, and calculated to produce an effect on the rest of the army; or what is more likely, that it is altogether an invention on the part of authors always unscrupulous when striving to exalt the character of their idol.

Hardly had this first act of treachery been completed when the 7th regiment arrived on the ground. This corps was commanded by Colonel Labedoyere, a young officer of noble family and handsome appearance, who

had been promoted to his rank by Louis XVIII.; but the reign of Napoleon had struck so deeply at the root of morality in France, that he did not hesitate to turn against his sovereign and benefactor, the power which, in full reliance on his honour and loyalty, had been confided to him. He was intimate with the society of the Duchess de St Leu, acquainted with all their projects, an ardent admirer of the ex-Emperor, and his defection had, it is said, been fully anticipated. Unfortunately for himself, he too well justified these treasonable expectations, for he immediately offered his sword and his regiment to Napoleon, adding, however, that every thing was changed in France: "the people," he said, "had ceased to dream of military glory; the patriots had joined the Imperialists; but as they knew how hostile Napoleon had always been to them and their cause, it would be necessary to give the nation some guarantee capable of fully ensuring constitutional liberty." "That is already a settled point with me," replied Napoleon; "write to our friends, and tell them that I have come to give freedom to the people of France."

Thus reinforced by Labedoyere's troops, the invaders now hastened their march towards Grenoble. The Commandant, General Marchand, a man of strict honour, barred the gates, and made preparations for defence; but his efforts to retain the soldiers in their allegiance were unavailing, and no sooner were Napoleon's troops seen advancing with reversed arms, no sooner were the shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur! Vive la Garde!*" heard by the garrison, than they replied to the well-known cheers, and forcing open the gates, brought their former sovereign triumphantly into the fortress. Rendered confident of success by the number of troops who had spon-

taneously joined his standard, Napoleon now resumed his Imperial authority, directing by a decree, that from the 15th all the acts of government should be in his name. In hopes he already ascended the throne of former power; for he could not see that, for their own objects, selfish supporters were already despoiling it of all attributes of real strength.

It was only on the 7th, the very day on which the invaders entered Grenoble, that the *Moniteur* announced to France and the capital the strange revolution which was in progress: the same journal contained a royal ordinance, declaring Napoleon an outlaw, and convoking an immediate assembly of the Chambers. Though the Court and Royal party made light of Napoleon's landing, the King himself entertained a very different opinion of it; and the efforts made to use prompt and efficient measures show that neither firmness nor ability were wanting, had there been any armed force capable of giving them effect.

The invader was in the meantime advancing with rapid strides towards Lyons, where, as we have seen, an army had, in an evil hour, been assembled to oppose the threatened advance of Murat. The Count d'Artois, the Duke of Orleans, and Marshal M'Donald, were now despatched in all haste to assume the command of these troops; but it was soon found that no reliance could be placed upon their loyalty. The Count d'Artois riding through the ranks of the 13th dragoons, addressed an old scar-covered soldier, saying, "You at least, my brave comrade, will cry *Vive le Roi*." "Impossible, my Prince," said the man; "I can only reply with *Vive l'Empereur!*"

Such sentiments on the part of the troops rendered all hopes of resistance unavailing, and obliged the

Princes to withdraw from the scene; they were soon followed by Marshal M'Donald; and on the evening of the 10th, Napoleon entered the second city of France, cheered by the soldiery and by thousands of the lower ranks of the manufacturing population, who conducted him in triumph to the palace of the Archbishop.

Thus established at the head of a formidable army in the very centre of the kingdom, he was joined by emissaries from the different parties friendly to his return, and who, though of various shades in politics, all agreed on the necessity of establishing his new power on a foundation of constitutional liberty. Carnot offered even to ensure him the support of the patriots, if he would resign the Imperial dignity, and accept a supreme magistracy for life. Serious proposals of this nature, especially from Carnot, who a few days afterwards accepted the rank and title of Count, tend only to show how very little were the men, whom Providence, for purposes it may not be given us to fathom, had appointed to act such influential parts. It might have been sufficiently evident that Napoleon, restored to the throne by the mere force of the army, had it not in his power to rule as a constitutional sovereign, even if he had been so inclined, or possessed the character and talents necessary for so difficult a task; but he gave ready promises to all, and referred the consideration of the subject to the popular assembly he proposed to convoke. His language at Lyons continued to be as liberal as before, at the very time when he was issuing decrees by which all laws and guarantees were flagrantly violated.

By the first of these decrees, the Chambers of Peers and Deputies were abolished, and the Electoral Colleges summoned to meet at Paris in *Champ-de-Mai*, witness the coronation of Marie Louise and her son, and

give a definitive constitution to the State. A second decree banished all the emigrants whose names had not been erased from the list previous to the abdication of Fontainbleau ; a third abolished the household troops, and deprived all strangers of their commissions in the army ; a fourth abolished the order of St Louis, and conferred its revenues on the Legion of Honour ; while a fifth sequestrated the whole of the property of the Bourbon family. These proclamations reached Paris by innumerable channels ; and as they gave ample hopes of spoil and power, electrified the Imperial and Republican parties, who were boundless in their promises of the advantages the nation would derive from the return of the Emperor.

On the other hand, addresses of loyalty and attachment to the King and his government poured in from all quarters. The Chambers set the example, and were followed by all the constituted authorities, and by nearly all ranks of the better classes in the capital and the provinces : and there is no doubt that the vast majority of the people were friendly to the government of the restoration, however indifferent to the Bourbon family. All were sensible that Napoleon was only a messenger of war and bloodshed. Nor were the army wanting in expressions of loyalty : addresses from military bodies were every day received at the Tuileries ; "but never," says Capefigue, "was the word of man more shamefully trifled with than by the majority of those who were parties to such protestations. Generals, Colonels, officers of all rank signed loyal addresses to the King one day, and were no sooner out of Paris, than laughing at the promises they had given, the honour they had pledged, they hastened to join the Emperor."

Among the loudest in declarations of attachment to

the Bourbon government was Marshal Ney, so favourably known for his intrepidity in the battle-field. Appointed to the command of a body of troops at Lons-le-Saulniers, he kissed the King's hand on taking leave, assuring him, at the same time, that he would "bring back Napoleon in an iron cage." The Marshal's well known energy of character inspired the royal party with a good deal of confidence, and Ney and his iron cage were still the topic of Parisian conversation, when news announced, that he had joined the invader with his whole corps d'armée! It is almost impossible to look upon the government or governments, whether Imperial or Republican, which reared up whole classes in sentiments capable of leading to such conduct, as anything better than mere schools of treachery and corruption; for many of the individuals who, during these Revolutions, deviated so shamefully from the paths of rectitude and honour, had been endowed with qualities which, under nobler training, would have fitted them for the noblest actions.

In the north, military treason experienced a momentary check. General Le Febvre Desnouettes, having attempted to corrupt the garrison of La Fére, was defeated in his design by General Abouville; while Marshal Mortier induced the troops under D'Erlon, who had marched from Lille to join the conspiracy, again to return to their station and allegiance. This trifling success brought, however, no permanent advantages to the royal cause, which was now in fact desperate.

It was in vain that the King offered an amnesty to the troops who had deserted their duty, and called upon the army to save the country from the evils certain to follow the return of Napoleon. Equally vain was the appeal made to the youths of France, calling upon them

to imitate the example of the Prussians, and enrol themselves for the defence of their sovereign: there was no want, indeed, of loyal feeling among this class, who dreaded a return of the conscription, but time and means to give it effect were entirely wanting, at a moment when a regular army was approaching the seat of government, reinforced at every stage by the very troops sent to check their progress.

It was at first the King's intention to place himself at the head of the Chambers, and with the household troops and volunteers of the National Guard, to confront the enemy under the very walls of Paris; but the Council overruled this plan, whether wisely or not may be a question; and Napoleon having reached Fontainbleau, the aged monarch had no alternative but again to throw himself on the protection of strangers. At one o'clock on the morning of the 20th of March, he left the Tuileries, amidst the tears and lamentations of a vast multitude of people already assembled round the palace at that early hour. He was accompanied by Marshal M'Donald, who, with the honourable loyalty of conduct which so favourably distinguished him amidst scenes of almost universal dereliction from duty, remained as faithful to Louis as he had been to Napoleon, and attended the royal exile to the frontiers of Flanders, which he reached in safety. The fugitive Monarch established his court at Ghent, where he continued during the Hundred Days.

Napoleon, informed of the King's departure, prepared to take possession of the capital; but well aware that he was not popular with the citizens, purposely delayed his arrival; and it was not till nine o'clock at night that, uncheered and unobserved indeed by the people, he arrived at the Tuileries. Here he was received with the

most extravagant demonstrations of joy by a vast concourse of officers, soldiers, *employés*, and dignitaries of the empire, assembled to greet his return. Almost stifled by the pressure of the enthusiastic crowd that surrounded him, he was carried up the great stair on the shoulders of his adherents, who again saw wealth, power, state and influence, within their reach. The apartments of the palace were filled by a brilliant assemblage of ladies and ministers formerly attached to his court or party, and who had met to witness the completion of the work in which they had laboured so zealously and successfully. However grateful he may have felt for these exertions, Napoleon had the candour to admit, while going round the brilliant circle, that he had been brought to Paris "by the soldiers and subalterns of the army."

CHAPTER II.

THE HUNDRED DAYS: DIFFICULTIES OF NAPOLEON'S SITUATION. RESOLUTION OF THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA: SUPPRESSION OF THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE. MURAT COMMENCES HOSTILITIES IN ITALY: IS DEFEATED, AND TAKES REFUGE AT TOULON. CHAMP-DE-MAI: DISSATISFACTION OF THE CONSTITUTIONALISTS: THE MILITARY PREPARATIONS: NAPOLEON LEAVES PARIS FOR THE ARMY.

The day of Napoleon's arrival at Paris was evidently his last day of triumph and unmixed satisfaction; for placed on the lofty elevation he had now attained, could easily behold the dangerous precipices that surrounded his usurped throne, and the slender foundation on which his new power reposed. He had provoked the hostility of Europe, and now stood confronting the mightiest nations of the earth. Supported only in his fearful position by selfish partisans and a brave but rebellious army, he stood solitary and alone without a friend or party, and without the sympathies of the land over which his presence was certain to call down the horrors of a foreign invasion. From the rocks of Elba, from the shores of Cannes, the certainty of this result might already have been foreseen; but blinded by ambition, or destitute rather of the mental calmness that could enable him to take a just view of his situation, Napoleon saw it not; and, eager to regain his sceptre at

any price, made himself the tool of rancorous factions striving for power, and who would deem it doubly acceptable if purchased by the sacrifice of the once haughty Emperor, so long their deadliest foe.

A splendid review was indeed held in the Court of the Tuileries on the morning after his arrival. The assembled troops received the Emperor with tumultuous expressions of joy; and enthusiastic cheers burst from all the corps and spectators when he presented to them the Grenadiers of the Old Guard who had accompanied him from Elba, and who, in their sun-burnt visages and toil-worn garments, showed the hardships they had undergone in performing the daring task which seemed now achieved. But these promising appearances extended not beyond the ranks of the army; and the formation of the new ministry already proved how greatly the sovereign's power was altered, and how little confidence was placed in his fortune and position. It was with difficulty that Caulaincourt could be prevailed upon to resume the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, which Count Molé had declined; frankly avowing his opinion, that the drama of Empire was ended. Cambacérès, in like manner, refused his former appointment of Minister of Justice, and was only prevailed upon to undertake the duties of the office on condition that he should not be called upon to take any share in politics. Fouché did not even make his appearance at the Tuileries till sent for; and though he expressed a wish for the Foreign Department, was content to resume his former post at the head of the police.

Carnot, a man of limited intellect, but of decidedly Republican principles, became Minister of the Interior, and accepted, at the same time, the dignity of *Count*, "for services performed at the siege of Antwerp." As

this city was never besieged, it is evident that the stanch Republican was as ready to accept aristocratic titles as he had been willing to save the lives of accused Royalists, wealthy enough to redeem their heads from the block.*

The appointment to the new ministry of the old Jacobins, Fouché and Carnot, was intended as a pledge to the patriot party of the Emperor's intention to grant a liberal constitution, and reign in full accordance with its laws. What effect these nominations produced on the general feeling of the country, it is impossible to say; but it was universally remarked, that upon all constitutional questions, Napoleon expressed himself in a vague and obscure manner; and that, as Capefigue tells us, he constantly evaded giving any explicit declaration of his sentiments and intentions. When ultimately the opposition to his will assumed a more positive form, he frequently declared that victory alone could consolidate his power, and give the necessary stability to his throne. From the view he thus took of his position, it is evident that peace was incompatible with the continuance of his reign: for with a rapacious and spoil-breathing army at his disposal, it is natural to suppose that he would have seized the first favourable opportunity to engage in those wars, from the success of which he alone anticipated the security of his usurped power.

That such would ultimately be the result was easily foreseen by the Congress of Vienna; who were no sooner apprised of his landing, than they resolved to secure Europe from the evils certain to follow his return to

* See the Memoirs of Berriere, in which it is shown, that passports signed by Robespierre, Couthon, St Just and Carnot, were offered for 300,000 francs to two bankers confined in the Conciergerie, but refused by the prisoners, who, relying on their innocence, stood their trial and were executed, while the very men who had offered to save them for money were at the head of power.

power, and instantly proclaimed him an outlaw. This celebrated decree ran in these words :—

"By breaking the convention which established him in Elba, Bonaparte destroys the only legal title on which his existence depended. By appearing again in France with projects of confusion and disorder, he has deprived himself of the protection of the law, and manifested to the universe that there can be neither peace nor truce with him. The powers consequently declare, that Napoleon Bonaparte has placed himself without the pale of civil and social relations ; and that, as an enemy and disturber of the tranquillity of the world, he has rendered himself liable to public vengeance."

This proclamation dispelled the illusion under which many laboured, in believing that Napoleon had acted with the sanction of the Allies. Foreign war, with all its attendant evils, was now inevitable, and had to be prepared against at the very time when civil war was already kindled in the provinces.

In the South and the West an ardent spirit of loyalty had displayed itself. At Bordeaux, Toulon, Toulouse, and Marseilles, the people and National Guards had received the Duke of Angoulême with acclamation, and declared themselves loudly for the Bourbons. And it is said that the Royalist forces, at the disposal of the Prince and Marshal Massena, could easily have crushed the insurrection in its infancy had they been led with promptitude and resolution. This, however, was not the case. Napoleon was allowed to reach Paris ; and once in possession of the capital, of the main-springs of government, he broke not only the confidence of the Royalists, but the links also that could give unity of action to their scattered parties. Acknowledged by the whole army—for even the vulgar Augereau, who had insulted

his fallen sovereign near Valence, now sent in his submission and that of his troops—he was enabled to direct large bodies of regular forces against the volunteers and National Guards: the result could not be doubtful. After a few skirmishes, and the defection of all the regulars from the Royalist ranks, a capitulation was entered into at St Esprit, by which it was stipulated with General Gilly, that the Royal forces should lay down their arms, be disbanded, and an amnesty granted to all who had been engaged in the contest. General Grouchy, the superior commander, would not however ratify the arrangement, and contrary to its stipulations, detained the Duke of Angoulême in captivity.

As the first telegraphic despatch only announced the conclusion of the capitulation, the Duke of Bassano easily induced Napoleon to sanction it; but a few hours afterwards, a second despatch brought tidings that the Convention still wanted the ratification of General Grouchy, and that the Prince was yet in the hands of the Imperialists. The Secretary of State had discretion enough, however, to withhold from Napoleon the temptation of committing another Vincennes murder, and delayed communicating the second despatch till nightfall, when it was too late to recall the first sanction given to the capitulation. A violent outbreak of Imperial wrath followed on this discovery; and Napoleon, whatever his conduct might have been had the Prince still continued in custody, now affected a sort of generous magnanimity in commanding the release of one who was no longer his prisoner. The Duke of Angoulême embarked at Cette; the Duchess, who was at Bordeaux, sought shelter on board an English vessel, and sailed for Spain; the Duke of Bourbon abandoned La Vendée without an effort; Marseilles capitulated on the 13th

April; and on the 20th, a hundred guns fired from the Invalids announced to Paris that the civil war was ended, and the Imperial standard again floating in triumph over all the departments of France.

But however successful against internal foes, the Emperor's attempts to conciliate his foreign enemies proved unavailing. None of the letters he addressed to the different sovereigns of Europe were acknowledged, and every proposal to open negotiations on the basis of the treaty of Paris rejected without reply. Historians also speak of an unsuccessful attempt to carry off Marie Louise and her son; but it is not easy to see how such an attempt could be made.

By the proclamation of the 13th March, the Princes and Ministers assembled at Vienna had only outlawed an adventurer marching with a few hundred men towards Paris; but now the adversary stood before them, clothed in the mantle of Imperial France, and at the head of the mighty armies that had so long desolated Europe; and the Congress had now to decide whether the decree issued against the feeble should be executed against the strong, or allowed to remain a dead letter—a mere monument of the fear of its authors. It is said that some paused; but boldness prevailed, and the four great powers instantly entered into a treaty for carrying the stipulations of Chaumont into effect. A memorandum attached to the treaty by England and Austria declared, that though they made war on Napoleon, the general disturber of the peace of Europe, and were sincerely desirous of seeing Louis XVIII. restored to the throne, they had no wish to impose any government on France, or to interfere with the arrangement of its interior affairs. All the minor powers who had been parties to the previous alliance joined this compact; Britain

engaged to furnish not only an army but a subsidy of eleven millions sterling; and before Napoleon was firmly seated on his throne, he found himself confronted by the mightiest coalition the world had ever seen, and threatened by armies that ultimately mustered more than eight hundred thousand men on the soil of France. "*Voilà le Congres dissous*" were his words on landing in the Gulf of Juan: and here was the answer to the prophecy.

From Italy also evil tidings were received. Murat, alarmed as we have seen by Talleyrand's proceedings at the Congress of Vienna, no sooner heard that his brother-in-law had reascended the throne, than he crossed the Po with a splendidly equipped army of 30,000 men, and called upon the Italians to join him and effect the liberation of their beautiful and long-oppressed Peninsula. Much as the sentiment might speak home to the feelings of the people, it is evident that they trusted little to independence achieved under the auspices of a French Revolutionist. Not a single man joined Murat's standard; and the Neapolitan army, attacked on the 9th April at Tolentino by the Austrians under General Bellegarde, fled at the first onset, hardly offering a shadow of opposition. An attempt to make a stand at Rimini produced no better result; and the unhappy King, forsaken by his troops, was forced to throw himself into a coasting vessel, which brought him safely to Toulon. His Queen sought shelter on board an English frigate, and landed at Trieste. The throne of Naples thus left vacant, was occupied by the Sicilian family, who arrived from Palermo, under the escort of a British force.

Still severer was the disappointment caused by the universal disapprobation with which the new constitution was received. The *Act Additionnel*, so termed as

forming only an addition to the previous constitution of the empire, was drawn up by Benjamin de Constant, and differed but slightly from the charter of Louis XVIII.; for it established the principle of an hereditary monarchy and nobility, a house of representatives chosen by the people; responsible ministers, irremovable judges, and trial by jury in all criminal cases: the most essential elements of a free constitution in fact.

But Napoleon had no friends in the country, and his measures, whether good or bad, were condemned by all: by the Royalists from principle, and by the Jacobins, or so-called Patriots, because they wished to destroy his power and influence. They had assisted to recall him in order that he might overthrow the Bourbons by means of the army, and now tried by the most unworthy means to wrench from him the reins of government which they had helped to place in his hands. The Press, which he had liberated on his first arrival at Paris, also turned against him; while his very ministers spoke of him with contempt, and treated him in a manner which it is not easy to suppose that a man of spirit could have brooked. To his friends, the rude and vulgar Carnot declared that the sovereign he was serving only held power at the pleasure of the Jacobins; and Fouché, detected in a treasonable negotiation with Metternich, was found too strong to be punished; and very calmly laid the document before the Emperor, as fragments of a correspondence, "from which his Majesty would perceive, that an abdication in favour of the King of Rome would prove the best mode of arranging with the Allies." Napoleon frowned indeed, but nothing more; and the man who had been so haughty in prosperity, who had insulted kings, and slandered queens the ornaments of their sex, now remained

passive beneath the sneers of a renegado priest and regicide, stained with the foulest crimes of the Revolution.

Nothing shows more clearly the absence, during these Hundred Days, of some leading and influential mind capable of swaying the confused masses of society, than the great power acquired by this arch-intriguer Fouché, a man avowedly mistrusted by all parties. The manner also in which he employed his power, and the objects which he had in view, seem equally unintelligible. Vanity might deceive a man of Carnot's vulgar intellect and limited understanding into a belief that the Jacobin faction could stand without the aid of Napoleon's military influence; but that Fouché, admitted by all parties to have been distinguished for great sagacity, should have fallen into so glaring an error is hardly to be credited. And yet we find him from the first counteracting the efforts of Napoleon, and striving to call forth and embody the despised remnants of the Jacobin party. At the same time we see him negotiating with Metternich for the establishment of a regency in favour of the King of Rome; and latterly, though not before the battle of Waterloo, lending his aid to the cause of Louis XVIII.; evident as it must have been, that a regicide would find no lasting favour from the Bourbons, however willing they might be to profit by his assistance in the hour of difficulty. He might well say—

> "Oh what a tangled web we weave,
> When first we practise to deceive!"

One of Fouché's measures was a general armament of the lower classes of workmen and manufacturers, under the old Republican title of Federates. Obnoxious as all

such popular associations were to Napoleon, he was not only obliged to sanction the measure, but to witness a review of 20,000 of these bands who issued from the suburbs of Paris, and filed past him on the 26th May. Mixing with the praise of the Emperor the long-silenced Republican songs, the Marseilloise and Carmagnole, these filthy and disgusting Federates exhibited to the eyes of the frightened spectators, all that is degraded by habitual vice, and hardened by stupidity and profligacy. They recalled to the terrified Parisians the willing perpetrators of the worst horrors of the Revolution, and awakened in the breasts of the peaceful the dread of again witnessing a renewal of those frightful times. Napoleon cast a melancholy and afflicted look on the repulsive exhibition, so much at variance with the aristocratic pomp of his fallen empire ; but he was forced, nevertheless, to address these new allies, concluding his speech with the old Republican shout of "*Vive la Nation!*"

If Napoleon had beheld the Federate bands with evident aversion, the National Guard of Paris whom he reviewed soon afterwards received him with marked coldness and indifference. No enthusiasm was displayed in his favour ; few greetings were heard ; and the regular troops who witnessed these unpromising exhibitions, were deeply wounded on beholding the Emperor they had raised on their shields, fallen in the estimation of the respectable citizens, and reduced to court the applause of the despised rabble of the suburbs.

It was under such gloomy auspices that the assembly of the *Champ-de-Mai* was held. No pains had been spared to render it as splendid and imposing as possible. The first of June was the day of the great pageant, and the Champ-de-Mars, though fitted up as a vast amphi-

theatre, was filled to overflowing. There were present four thousand electors chosen by the Electoral Colleges, deputies from the navy and from all the regiments in France, together with thirty thousand men of the National Guard of Paris, and 200,000 spectators. Military bands played patriotic airs, salutes of artillery announced the arrival of the Emperor, and marked the different acts of the magnificent spectacle.

But though the day was fine, and the display brilliant in the extreme, the object of the ceremony was completely missed: it awakened no enthusiasm, and excited only the displeasure of the Republicans and the ridicule of the Royalists. The Jacobins and their faction believed, or affected to believe, that Napoleon intended to resign the Imperial dignity, and assume the title of President or General of the Republic; instead of which, they saw him come in Imperial state to act an Imperial part. They saw him and his brothers appear in theatrical robes, attended by chamberlains, dignitaries, heralds, masters of the ceremonies, and all the following of his former court. They expected to have had a voice in accepting or rejecting the new form of government; and soon perceived that they were only called upon to see the Emperor sign his own act, and take an oath to preserve the liberties he had deigned to grant. The nation had been told that the *Champ-de-Mai* was to witness the Coronation of the Empress and the King of Rome; but instead of this pledge of peace, it witnessed only a distribution of eagles, presented to the troops already prepared to march against the enemy. The pageant seemed a solemn announcement of war; and so far from electrifying the nation, cast a gloom around that proved how sincere was the grief with which the people now bade farewell to peace and its blessings.

Under the hostile influence of Fouché and Carnot, especially of the former, the election of members who were to compose the Chamber of Representatives had turned completely against the Emperor. In most places, the wealthy and respectable classes had absented themselves from the Electoral Colleges; in others, they were prevented from attending; and as the nominations thus fell into the hands of the Jacobin faction, the majority of the members returned consisted of ignorant and presumptuous declaimers, noisy orators, furious Jacobins and political adventurers, who, when assembled, formed the most turbulent, untractable, and indeed most contemptible of the many representative bodies witnessed in modern times.

The Chamber of Peers, composed in a great part of military men, of the nobles of the former Imperial government, and of a few Jacobins who, like Carnot and Seyès, had, rather inconsistently with their principles, accepted aristocratic rank and dignity from the hands of Napoleon, were sufficiently pliant; but from their very first meeting on the 4th June, the Representatives placed themselves in decided opposition to his government. It was the Emperor's wish that his brother Lucien should be elected President of the Chamber; and when the choice fell upon the old Girondist Lanjuinais, who, from having drawn up the charges against him in 1814, might almost be considered his personal enemy, he was so greatly displeased, that he refused at first to confirm the appointment, and replied, that he would send "an answer by one of his chamberlains." These words, when repeated, raised a complete storm in the Assembly, who declared them an insult to the national representatives. Napoleon was forced to submit, as he was afterwards to the appointments of the Vice-Presidents, all taken from the ranks of the popular party; thus showing how much

he had fallen from his former state. "I see," he said, "that they wish to curb the old arm of the Emperor; but if they think they can make a second Louis XVI. of me, they are mistaken: I am not a man to be dictated to by a body of factious advocates, or to allow my head to be taken off by a set of turbulent demagogues." It was an unfortunate boast; and contrasts deplorably, indeed, with the events yet to be recorded in this narrative.

The turbulent and presumptuous ignorance displayed by the Legislative Assembly, is an additional proof of the very little talent for which the liberal and republican party in France were then distinguished. By adhering to the Emperor, and frankly supporting him against foreign and domestic foes, while they checked as much as possible his arbitrary disposition, they might—had he proved successful—have maintained their ground, and rendered some service to the nation. But by placing themselves in factious opposition to his government, they not only checked his hand, and forfeited the sympathies of all who were anxious to save the country from foreign invasion, but sealed their own doom most effectually, leaving it to be decided in the battle-field whether they were to be expelled from their hall of folly by the victorious Grenadiers of Napoleon, or the conquering hussars of Blücher.

It is usual to say that the Emperor, though he failed in reconciling the different factions which divided the country, effected almost wonders in preparing for the contest in which he was about to engage. Marshal Davoust, an able soldier, was Minister of War; and we can well suppose that no efforts would be wanting, either on his or his sovereign's part, to form an army capable of supporting the last hopes of the Imperial party. But

though it would be vain to doubt that diligence and exertions were used, it is equally vain to look for corresponding results; and the small force with which Napoleon was ultimately obliged to take the field, contradicts not only the boast advanced by his adherents, but falls far short of what might have been anticipated when the power and resources of France are considered, and when we recollect what, in other times, had been done in France as well as in other countries.

On the 1st of April 1814, the French army, including the forces which had served under the immediate orders of the Emperor on the Seine and the Marne, the troops of Soult and Suchet on the Spanish frontier, those of Augereau on the Rhone, the troops of the Viceroy in Italy, the corps of Maison in the Netherlands, and of Davoust at Hamburg, together with the garrisons of the Spanish, German and Italian fortresses which still held out, amounted to 451,000 men. And if we add to these 150,000 returned prisoners, it gives a total of 600,000 trained soldiers, of whom two-thirds, at least, were fit for immediate service in the field. What the new levies may have rendered, we have no means of knowing; for the conscription could not be resorted to: its very name was proscribed as recalling times of war and oppression, which were not so popular with the nation as it has since been the fashion to suppose. Nor does it seem that the difficulty of arming and equipping the troops could be so very great: for Metz and Strasburg, the principal foundries and military depôts, had not been occupied by the Allies during the invasion of 1814: and the National Guard was well supplied with muskets and accoutrements. The vast number of guns lost by the French during the campaign of 1812, 1813, 1814, had not perhaps been replaced; but the Bour-

bon government had necessarily exerted itself—as any French government would—in restoring the artillery to its requisite degree of efficiency. The armies remaining in France in April 1814 also retained the mass of their artillery, though a good many guns had been lost during the campaign. And it is well known, that in the latter years of the Empire, the French armies carried with them far more numerous trains of artillery than had ever before been brought into the field.

On the first of June, a few days before the commencement of hostilities, the effective force of the French army amounted to only 217,000 men; and as the Bourbons, who to gain the favour of the troops had, as we have seen, maintained a larger force than was deemed consistent with the situation of the country, left an effective army of 175,000 men* under arms, it only gives an augmentation of 42,000 effected by the boasted exertions of Napoleon. But if we even suppose the Bourbons to have left a much smaller force, and say that the Emperor added 80,000 men to the army in the course of three months, it still gives a small result when compared to the forces France brought into the field at the commencement of the Revolution, and with the gallant numbers the poor and thinly-peopled country of Prussia sent forth in 1813. It gives a less result still when compared to the force that in the 17th century a single nobleman brought to his sovereign's aid. Austria and Catholic Germany lay almost prostrate before the arms of Gustavus Adolphus; the Church of Rome had not a disposable soldier at command, when Wallenstein Duke

* The Duke of Wellington, in his Dispatches, vol. xii. p. 290, estimates at 280,000 the French army under the Bourbons. We follow the views most favourable to Napoleon's supposed exertions, without pretending to reconcile the contradictions.

of Friedland took up the cause that Princes deemed hopeless; and in the course of three months raised, equipped, and brought into the field an army of 50,000 men, that checked the advance of the Protestants, saved the Catholics from impending destruction, and changed in all probability the fate of the world. Wallenstein, though wealthy, was only a private individual, and had nothing but his name, fame and genius to aid him; whilst Napoleon, who has been so highly lauded for effecting far less, was sovereign of the wealthiest, most powerful and most populous of the continental states.

In his Memoirs, the exile of St Helena tells us that at the opening of the campaign his forces amounted to 363,000 regular troops, and of an extraordinary army of 196,000 men, composed of National Guards, Veterans, and Marines, intended to form the garrisons of ninety fortresses. He farther adds, that the measures taken would have given him 850,000 men, all armed, equipped, and fit for service by the first of September. In this idle boast he only resembles a broken speculator, who pretends to have possessed great wealth in order to justify the rashness of his conduct. The Emperor had, in truth, little more than 200,000 men at his disposal, and tried his fortune with them: had he succeeded in breaking the coalition, or in repulsing the Allied Armies, he would have boasted of the smallness of the means with which he achieved such great actions; but having failed, and not wishing to appear a mere adventurer, he strives to magnify the forces which he would have us believe were placed at his disposal by the boundless attachment entertained for him by the French people.

This attachment was not, however, so very evident; for the white flag had already been displayed in various quarters; and during the month of May, disturbances

of so serious a nature broke out in La Vendée, that it became necessary to despatch 25,000 men, under General Lamarque, for the purpose of subduing them.

This civil war, if so it deserves to be called, was soon indeed quelled; but the large force which it absorbed, caused a serious diminution to an army preparing to meet a foreign enemy.*

To augment the general means of resistance, field-works had been constructed for the protection of Paris; and on the right bank of the Seine the line had acquired some strength, but on the left the works were equal to nothing. It was also intended to fortify Lyons, and to place the principal strongholds of the empire in a proper state of defence; but very little had been done when hostilities commenced; and even the fortresses along the Belgian frontier were indifferently armed, and very ill prepared to offer effectual resistance to regular attacks.

Feeble as these means were for resisting the efforts of combined Europe, no time was now left to improve their strength, or augment their efficiency. The day of battle had arrived; and it only remained for Napoleon to strike the first blow at his own choice, or await the onset of his united adversaries on the very soil of France. In the Netherlands, the Duke of Wellington

* On the 1st of June, Napoleon's disposable forces seem to have stood thus:—The Main Army along the Netherland frontier, 130,000 men. On the Upper Rhine, under General Rapp, 27,000 men. Army of the Jura, under Le Courbe, 8000 men. Corps of observation on the Italian frontier, under Brune and Suchet, 19,000 men. Corps of observation on the Spanish frontier, under Decean and Clauzel, 8400 men. Army in La Vendée, under General Lamarque, 25,000 men: giving a total effective force of 217,400 men. There were, besides, according to Napoleon's statement, 146,000 men in the depôts, making with the *extraordinary army* already mentioned, a total of 559,500 men.

was gathering the never-conquered army of England, and Blücher the war-breathing bands of Prussia. On the Upper Rhine, Schwarzenberg was assembling his multitudinous host, composed of Austrians and of the contingents of the Southern States of Germany. The Russian army, under the Grand Duke Constantine, was in full march towards the Middle Rhine; and in Italy, General Frimont was preparing to cross the Alps with an Austro-Piedmontese army. Seven hundred thousand men, supported from all quarters by vast reserves, were closing in upon the French frontier: to burst the iron circle before all power of resistance was crushed within its grasp, seemed now the only chance of safety that remained to be tried.

And even to leave Paris was, as Napoleon felt, attended with danger. The Chamber of Representatives had become every day more democratic in their sentiments, and more hostile to him,—to the very man whom it is now so much the fashion to term the man of the people. Their answer to his address was far from conciliatory, and proclaimed in no very courteous terms their full intention to revise the Additional Act, and set bounds, if necessary, to the "ambition of a victorious Prince." In return, his parting reply was judicious, and not without dignity. He stated the crisis to be imminent; and "cautioned them to avoid the conduct of the Roman people in the latter ages of the empire, who could not refrain from furiously engaging in abstract discussions while the battering-rams of the enemy were shaking the gates of the capital."

After giving the Chamber this very rational though bootless advice, Napoleon, on the 12th June, left Paris to place himself at the head of the last army he was ever destined to command. He tells us himself, "that he

felt a depression of spirits, and was no longer animated by the confidence of success which had accompanied him in all his former undertakings."

We can easily believe this without supposing that a man of merely material composition should be impressed by the chilling effects of the shadows that coming events cast before them in their progress. Feeble and ordinary characters, tinctured with the share of sanguine temperament that belongs to the majority of our species, but resting on no better foundation than extravagant vanity, are as easily depressed in adversity as elated in prosperity. Unable to analyze the true causes of success, they readily ascribe it to their own merit; and when the tide turns, when fortune frowns, seek in vain for any firm ground on which confidence can be reposed. Honour and virtue, which can alone bestow real firmness in adversity, are as completely wanting as the genius which should furnish resources: the buoyancy of vanity is gone, and its helpless victim is left to cast the die of fate with apparent composure perhaps, but with the feeble heart and trembling hand that naturally bodes defeat and rarely brings success.

CHAPTER III.

COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES: STATE AND POSITION OF THE ARMIES: BATTLES OF LIGNY AND QUATRE-BRAS: THE PRUSSIANS RETIRE TO WAVRE, THE BRITISH TO MONT ST JEAN. REMARKS ON NAPOLEON'S STATEMENTS, AND ON THE MILITARY OPERATIONS.

THE campaign of 1815, though brief in duration, is so important in results and gigantic in detail, as to equal, if it does not surpass, in interest the most celebrated contest recorded in military history. At no time had civilized nations brought such vast armies into the field; no war had ever witnessed so rapid a succession of fierce and sanguinary combats, and never before had the stern events of battle produced such prompt, final, and decisive results. The echoes of the first guns fired on the banks of the Sambre, had scarcely ceased to reverberate through Europe, when the voice of fame already proclaimed the victory achieved, a great war terminated, an empire overthrown, and the oppressor of nations struck down for ever. Events seem to augment in grandeur as we approach the close of our narrative; which, passing the ordinary bounds of history, extends to the verge of fable and romance.

The great share which the people of Britain claim in these brilliant actions should render them especially interesting to us: for military glory forms, when wisely

used, one of the most valuable legacies that a national generation can bequeath to their descendants. It is a sevenfold shield against unjust aggression ; and having been gained for our country by noble exertions made during the contest,—by vast sacrifices, and by torrents of the bravest blood that ever flowed in the hearts of men, must,—in justice to honour and patriotism,—be transmitted bright and untarnished to posterity ; as free from the misty haze which overstretched liberality would cast upon its surface, as from the blackening stain by which the poisoned breath of foreign and domestic foes would strive to obscure its lustre.

Impressed with these views, anxious to retain for our countrymen the glory to which they are entitled, and of which so many writers have endeavoured to deprive them, we shall dedicate to the details of this campaign a few more pages than we have been able to bestow on the other military events recorded in these volumes.

Napoleon, who had left Paris on the 12th June, established his head-quarters on the 14th at Baumont, the central point on which the army was closing. Detachments of National Guards, posted along the frontiers, had vainly endeavoured to mask the movement of the troops. The Duke of Wellington was informed of the march of the divisions from Lille and Valenciennes ; and on the 13th, Marshal Blücher already learned the arrival of the corps which had been assembled at Metz. On the 14th, the whole of the French army were encamped between Philipville and Solre-sur-Sambre, within a league of the Belgian frontier ; and the glow of countless watchfires which after nightfall illumined the wide horizon, told the adverse posts that a vast host was assembled in their immediate front. A non-commissioned officer and two privates who deserted during

the night, confirmed the intelligence that Napoleon had joined the army, and that a battle was immediately expected. The following proclamation had already, indeed, announced it to the troops :—

"Soldiers! This is the anniversary of Marengo and Friedland. Then, as after Austerlitz and Wagram, we were too generous ; we gave credit to the oaths and protestations of princes whom we allowed to remain on their thrones. Now, however, coalesced among themselves, they aim at the independence and most sacred rights of France ; and have commenced the most unjust aggression. Are we not then the same men ? Soldiers ! at Jena, when fighting against these Prussians now so arrogant, you were as one to two : at Montmirail as one to three. Let those among you who have been in England, recite the story of their prison-ships, and the sufferings they have sustained in them. The Saxons, Belgians, Hanoverians, the soldiers of the Rhenish confederation, grieve at the thought of lending their arms to the cause of princes, enemies of justice and the rights of nations. They know that the coalition is insatiable : that after having devoured twelve millions of Poles, twelve millions of Italians, six millions of Belgians, a million of Saxons, it will devour the lesser states of Germany. Fools that they are ; a moment of prosperity blinds them. If they enter France, they will find in it their graves! Soldiers! we have forced marches to make, battles to fight, perils to encounter ; but with constancy, the victory will be ours ; and the rights, the honours of the country, will be reconquered. For every Frenchman who has a heart, the moment has arrived to conquer or to die."

Unworthy as are the many falsehoods contained in this wretched production, the last words, emanating from

one who, having sacrificed millions to his ambition, survived the field of Waterloo, are assuredly the most unfortunate that could have been uttered. If history has too long neglected to contrast the words and the actions of this man, they here at least speak for themselves.

Two armies intended to act against France were assembled in Belgium: the one composed of Prussian troops, under the command of Field-Marshal Blücher, the other composed of British, Germans, and Belgians, under the orders of the Duke of Wellington. The Prussian army could bring, at the moment when operations commenced, about 110,000 men into the field; but many of the corps of which it was composed had only been a few months embodied; entire regiments had been raised in provinces acquired by the peace of 1814, and thousands of the soldiers had actually served under the banners of the very man against whom they were now to fight. This was no longer the old Silesian army.

The *disposable* troops under the orders of the Duke of Wellington could hardly exceed 78,000 men. Of these, 40,000 were British, including about 5000 of the King's German Legion, and constituted the nucleus of the entire force. The next in value were the Hanoverians and Brunswickers. These were men of undoubted courage and gallantry, but young and untried soldiers, amounting in all to about 16,000. Dutch, Nassau, and Belgians, to the number of 22,000, made up the rest of this heterogeneous mass.

The British cavalry and artillery in this army were superb and magnificent; superior, perhaps, to any force of the kind which the world had ever seen: and Marshal Blücher, who reviewed the former a short time before the opening of the campaign, declared that he had not given the world credit for containing so many fine men.

The infantry, who after all carried away the foremost honours of the day, were inferior in composition: there were many second battalions formed entirely of lads and recruits, that had never seen a shot fired; a great part of the flower of the British infantry, the victors of so many fields, had not returned from America.

Early in June, the armies so composed were cantoned along the Belgian frontier, in a line extending from Ath, which might be considered the right of the British position, to Liege where Bülow's corps, forming the extreme left of the Prussian army, was posted. The high road from Charleroi to Brussels ran between the two armies. The advanced posts of the Prussian right wing occupied the former place; and a brigade of Nassau troops, forming the left of the Duke of Wellington's army, was stationed at Frasne, on the same road. Quatre-Bras and Fleurus thus became the centre and rallying-points of the entire mass of Anglo-German troops, assembled to oppose an enemy advancing against Brussels by the road from Charleroi; and it was calculated that the British army could reach the appointed post in twenty-two hours from the firing of the first gun, and the Prussians in twenty-four hours. As this brief space of time could not possibly be wanting, the troops were allowed to remain in the good quarters they occupied, and which facilitated besides their means of obtaining supplies: but war is fortune's province; and here events proved that a reserve of *time* may occasionally be as necessary as a reserve of men. The Prussian calculation was grounded on the supposition that Bülow's corps would be at Hanüt, whereas it remained at Liege, the order sent for its march on the 15th having miscarried by the inattention of the horseman to whom it was intrusted; an error that caused the absence of 30,000 men from the

first day's action. Before he accepted battle, Marshal Blücher was already aware that he could not depend on the arrival of this corps; but he had 80,000 men in position; and it was not in his character to decline a contest at the head of such a force.

But if the Prussians were assembled and ready to fight, how, it will be asked, did it happen that the British were not assembled at Quatre-Bras? The question is easily answered.

Situated as the Prussians were in regard to position, it was highly judicious on their part to assemble at Fleurus on the first intelligence of the meditated attack. This position, which was on the extreme right of their line of cantonments, brought them into close and immediate communication with the Duke of Wellington's army, the left of which extended to Quatre-Bras, the intended rallying-point of his Grace's troops, in *case the Prussians should be attacked, or the French advance in force along the Charleroi road.* There was nothing whatever to prevent Marshal Blücher from drawing in the troops on his left, and closing to his right; he uncovered nothing that could be struck at: for it was morally certain that if the French advanced, it would be for the purpose of striking a blow at the Allied Armies, and seizing Brussels; no one could suppose for a moment that 130,000 men under Napoleon would cross the frontier merely for the pleasure of making a military promenade to Liege and Namur, where no earthly object was to be gained.

A single look at the map of Belgium will show, that with the Duke of Wellington the case was different. By drawing in the troops of his right before he knew exactly where the blow would fall, he was liable to uncover Brussels and his line of communication with his depôts and advancing reinforcements; a matter of far greater

importance to an English than to a Continental army. And though Brussels was of no very essential value as a military post, it was of great importance in a political point of view. It was the seat of government of the newly-formed kingdom of the Netherlands, and the capital of the country most ardently desired by the French people, and the capture of which would have given Napoleon's cause a moral force and strength of popularity in France, of which it was then almost totally destitute.

These circumstances, combined with the danger of having his right flank turned, and his line of communication cut through at the very opening of the campaign, necessarily forced the British commander to cover Brussels as long as possible: and so fully was this understood between the Duke and Marshal Blücher, that the task of defending the Halle and Nivelle roads, in case of attack from that direction, was especially consigned to the British; the Prussians engaging, on their part, to march from Fleurus, and fall upon the flank of the advancing enemy. It followed, consequently, that the right of the British force which covered this Halle road, could not be withdrawn till the true direction of the French movement should be ascertained; and we consequently find, that while the Duke and Marshal Blücher were observing the French from the heights of Bry, divisions of the British were halting at Waterloo and Nivelle, ready to move either to the right and cover the roads in that direction, or advance, as they afterwards did, to Quatre-Bras. From circumstances too long to be detailed here, it may easily be inferred that the Duke of Wellington expected the blow to fall on his right, and the main attack to be made by the Mons and Halle road. And it certainly appears that this

would have been Napoleon's best policy: for it would have given him at least a chance—slight as it might have been—of fighting one of the Allied Armies singly, whilst, by throwing himself in between the two, he was morally certain of having both upon his hands.

The Duke had early information of the French movements, and at nine o'clock in the morning of the 15th, already received intelligence of the attack made on the Prussian out-posts. But an attack on picquets and advanced posts could not indicate the direction the main body of the hostile force would take,—such attacks are often indeed made to mask a movement,—and the British army could not leave Brussels uncovered till that direction should be known. As soon as all doubt on this point was removed, the troops were instantly ordered to march; and if they reached the battle-ground later than could have been wished, they yet arrived in time to achieve victory, the main object of all military movements.

Against the Allied Armies, posted and composed as we have here described, Napoleon could bring 130,000 effective men. This estimate will, we suspect, be found very near the mark, as it exceeds by only 8000 the number specified by the Emperor in his own Memoirs; and falls short by 10,000 of the number at which the best informed German writers have rated the French force. This army had many advantages over either of the Allied Armies. It was composed exclusively of natives of one country, mostly old soldiers, trained to battle, acquainted with their officers, placing boundless confidence in their leader, and looking eagerly forward to the splendid rewards that in former times had crowned the victors of so many fields. All were zealous, many were enthusiastic; and the junior officers, the most in-

fluential class in a French army, were complete fanatics in the new cause they had embraced.

The cavalry consisted entirely of experienced and well-mounted troopers. The whole army had been newly clothed; guns, arms and accoutrements were also new; and there can be little hesitation in affirming, that the host Napoleon now led forth was the finest and most efficient he had ever commanded; the finest, perhaps, that France had ever sent forth to battle. It was to be employed in a task worthy of its gallantry, and certain to "dim its armour shine;" for it was the Emperor's intention, as it was his policy, to strike a blow at the English and Prussians as his nearest and deadliest foes, before the Austrians and Russians could come within the circle of operations.

In the *Memoires* dictated at St Helena, Napoleon has himself told us what was his plan of operation for the campaign. He intended, it seems, to throw himself between the two Allied Armies; to separate the Prussians from the British; to attack them in detail, and beat the one before it could be assisted by the other. Pretending also to calculate, as Hannibal is said to have done, on the character of his adversaries, he expected from the hussar habits and dauntless energy of Marshal Blücher, that the Prussian army would be first in the field, and that, strong or weak, they would instantly be marched to the aid of their allies. Owing to what he is pleased to term the "cautious disposition, the deliberate and methodical manner, of the Duke of Wellington," he did not believe that the British army would make any forward movement till their whole force should be assembled. To the many who judge of military plans by specious words alone, and without taking the trouble to analyze the real and applicable meaning of the flattering phrases

to which their faith is so readily attached, this plan will no doubt sound vastly well. To those, however, who bring it to the test of professional or logical investigation, it will prove to have originated in a complete confusion of ideas, and in a total inability to define the exact meaning of the very language on which it seems to have been founded.

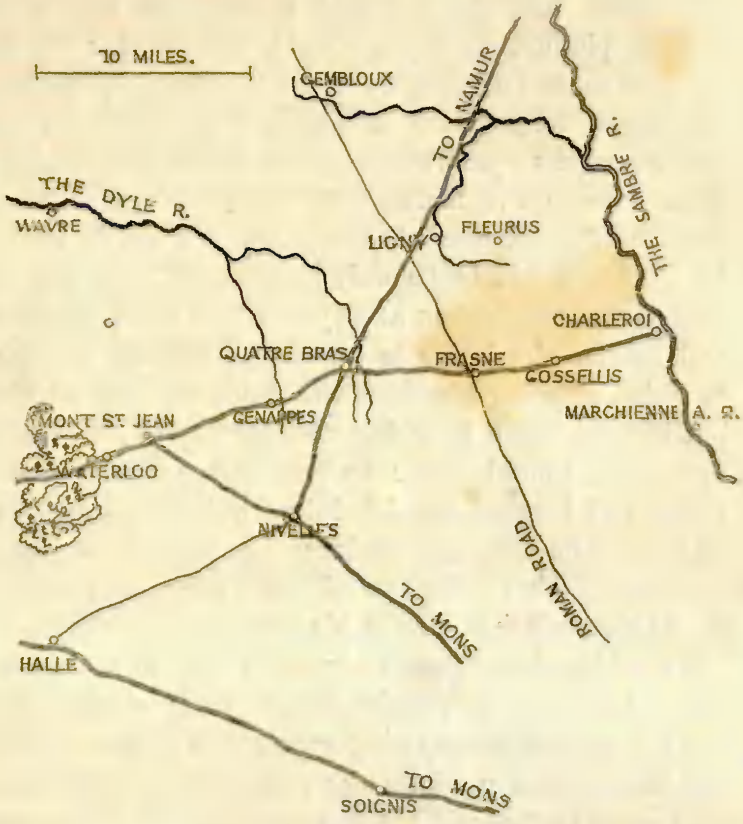
To separate two armies against which it is intended to act, and to cripple or destroy the one before it can be supported by the other, is no doubt a most excellent plan, wherever it is practicable. But it is practicable only when the armies to be assailed are so situated, or so far asunder, that the one can be forced into decisive action and defeated before it is assisted by its ally; before the assailing army—the army acting the part the French proposed to act here—becomes exposed to the attack of the two hostile forces combined. Situated as the English and Prussians were, they could not, unless by their own mismanagement, be thus attacked in detail; for, as the event proved, they were near enough to assist each other. Nor could they be compelled to fight. Their retreat was open, and they had, both in first and second line, secure roads of communication by which they could lend each other prompt and effectual support. To rush in between two armies so situated, is to rush headlong into the lion's den. The assailant cannot aim a blow at one enemy without the certainty of being struck in flank or rear by the other, obliged to fight two battles instead of one; and if thrown upon the defensive, forced to make front in two different directions; as actually happened to the French in consequence of the lauded manœuvres here mentioned.

The operations commenced at day-break on the 15th of June; the French slowly winding their way through the deep and miry roads leading to the bridges over

the Sambre at Marchiennes-au-Pont, Charleroi, and Chatelet. The skirmishing already began on the right bank of the river, and it was noon before Charleroi was taken and the passage effected. The French, notwithstanding Napoleon's boast to the contrary, moved so slowly that the leading division of the left wing required no less than eight hours, from four o'clock in the morning to twelve at noon, to advance from Thuin to Marchiennes, a distance of only seven miles, though merely opposed by a single battalion acting as skirmishers. The resistance of the Prussians did not cease with the passage of the river. General Ziethen, whose corps was nearest the enemy, had been directed to dispute the ground with the advancing foe, and executed the order in a brave and skilful manner; though not without sustaining considerable loss: he made partial stands at Gilly and Gossellis, and protracted the contest till nightfall. There have been times when these actions and skilful retreat would have filled the voice of fame, and obtained distinguished honours for the few who maintained so difficult a contest against the many; but the mighty thunder-burst that followed, seemed literally destined to obliterate from the minds of men all that valour and heroism had ever before achieved.

The morning of the 16th June beheld the Prussian troops entering into position along the heights of Bry, and the British advancing in full march upon Quatre-Bras, by the Brussels and Nivelles roads. At the same time Napoleon was dividing his army. The main body turned to their right, and proceeded towards Fleurus, in order to attack the Prussians. To the left wing, under Marshal Ney, was assigned the dangerous honour of encountering the British. The words, "*Nous marchons contre les Anglais,*" passed uncheered along the column,

when its destination became known: the ill-omened words checked not indeed the spirits of the brave, but they were associated with too many fatal recollections



to elicit even a single shout of anticipated triumph from the most sanguine of that enthusiastic host.

It was noon, when the glitter of steel issuing from the woods round Fleurus announced the march of Napoleon. Two deep and winding columns, bristling with arms, and covered by swarms of light cavalry, moved slowly into the plain.

"To hero, boune for battle strife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life
One glance of that array."

Sunbeams brightly reflected from helm and glaive, waving plumes, prancing steeds, the regular development of masses taking up their station preparatory to the onset, long trains of artillery protected by dark and numerous squadrons, successively forming on points from whence the melancholy work of destruction can best be effected, present altogether a sight that must be seen and felt to be duly appreciated, and one that "survivors recollect in after years." It fires the blood, and excites the brave to hopes and feelings, compared to which all other emotions are cold and unprofitable; but its first sight is trying to the hearts of ordinary men, and should never be gratuitously presented to young and inexperienced soldiers quietly awaiting the attack. The calm and business-like preparations of the assailants look to the eye of the novice, who sees not the anxious glances cast at his own position, like boundless confidence and proofs of perfect skill in the work of war. An army in position has, in comparison with an army in motion, no imposing appearance to console him; and the succession of thoughts that on such occasions rush quickly through the heart, make the hours seem endless, and give danger time to assume a thousand gigantic shapes in the excited imagination of unsteeled mortals. Young soldiers should always, if possible, be hurried into action, as the consciousness of having once behaved well, or of having stood their ground, will elevate them in their own estimation, and augment in a tenfold degree whatever previous courage and confidence they may have possessed. On this occasion, all the

pride, pomp and circumstance of war, told against the Prussians, who had most recruits in the ranks.

Napoleon, on reconnoitring his formidable adversaries, found them posted along some undulating and rather elevated ground, called the Heights of Bry. Their left rested on the large village of Sombreff and the hamlet of Tongrenelle, the centre was at Bry. The right extended to Wagnele and the old Roman road in the direction of Marbais, and was, what is termed in military language, completely in the air, *en l'air*. The reserves were behind the centre, sheltered by the hill on which a windmill, called the Moulin de Bussu, marks the highest point of the surrounding country. The rivulet of Ligny, the banks of which are marshy, and in many parts rugged, ran along the entire front of the position, which was besides covered by the strongly-

built village of Ligny, situated in advance of the centre; as the three hamlets of St Amand, St Amand la Haye, and St Amand le Hameau, were in advance of the right. The bank of the rivulet, and the intersected ground in front of Sombreff and Tongrenelle, rendered that part of the position strong and nearly secure from attack. On the other hand, the principal village of St Amand was far in advance, and so near the rising ground occupied by the enemy as to be ill suited for defence. Considered as a whole, the Prussian position was a very fair one; and if it had no features of particular strength, it offered no very weak points. The usual assertion that the nature of the ground gave the French artillery a decided advantage over the Prussians, is only one of the many assumptions circulated in hopes of enhancing the fame of Napoleon. The entire position measured about three miles along its winding front, and was occupied by nearly 70,000 infantry and 9000 cavalry, with 252 pieces of artillery. Of nearly similar strength were the forces of the assailants.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, all Napoleon's arrangements having been completed, the first onset was made against the Prussian position. A strong force of cavalry, under Marshal Grouchy, was ordered to keep the adverse left wing in check; but as the nature of the ground did not admit of their following up any success which they might there obtain, the whole fury of the attack was directed against the villages of Ligny and St Amand, and was just as boldly met as fiercely made. We have before described the manner in which such combats are fought; and here they were of the most murderous description. In Ligny, the contest never ceased during the whole duration of the battle; the contending parties fighting at last for the burning ruins

of the village and castle. The nearest hamlet of St Amand was carried by the French at the first onset; and though partially recovered, it remained ultimately in their hands. The Hameau and La Haye also became the scenes of frequent and sanguinary struggles; they were taken by the assailants, but retaken by the Prussians under the direction of the Field-Marshal himself, and remained ultimately in their possession. So fierce were these village combats, that on some points men actually met in hand-to-hand contests: a proof that, with suitable arms, even modern infantry would close with their adversaries. General Jurgas having been repulsed in attempting to sally out, and advance from Ligny, two French grenadiers rushed forward at a moment when their enemies were retiring, and endeavoured to seize the colours of the 2d West Prussian regiment, carried by Ensign, now Captain Schulze: the gallant young officer, left alone for an instant, would have perished in the unequal struggle, when two musketeers arriving to his aid, made the brave assailants pay with their lives the forfeit of the rash attempt.

On another point, three Prussian soldiers of the 23d regiment threw themselves on a party of French arrayed round a standard; the flag torn and dyed with blood was captured, but not till the officer who carried it had been slain in defending his gallant trust. Several actions of this character fought on different parts of the line, prove how bitter was the spirit of hostility by which the contending parties were animated.

It was past eight o'clock; four hundred pieces of artillery had for five hours been carrying death from army to army: from the first a fierce tirailleur fire had been engaged along the whole course of the ravine, the combats had been most murderous, and the streets in

the villages were almost choked with the slain, but no impression had been made on either side. All the attempts of the French to penetrate beyond St Amand had been repulsed with great loss; the advance of the Prussians from the same quarter, as well as a feeble cavalry onset from Tongrenelle, had been equally unsuccessful; nor had any general attack been made by either party. Blücher was now anxious only to hold his ground till nightfall, certain that the first dawn of morning would bring Bülow's corps and the whole of the British army to his aid; and as the French had suffered severely, and gained no advantage of any consequence, the object would, it was thought, be easily attained. A heavy shower of rain which fell at this time suspended the firing, darkened the air, and made many believe that the battle had actually terminated.

This would have been certain victory to the Prussians, and defeat to the French; but though Napoleon had tarried most unaccountably in his operations, it was evident that he could not resign a contest on which his very existence depended. No choice was now left him; he was forced to fight it out to the last; nor was any time left for farther delay; day was closing rapidly, and, as if eager to withdraw from sights of human suffering, was already veiled in grey and misty clouds. Bülow's approach was known; the British were still at Quatre-Bras, and their army could not fail of being assembled during the night; so that his doom was sealed if the morning sun still found him occupied with the Prussians in front of Ligny. A part of the British infantry fighting to the greatest disadvantage owing to the total want of cavalry and artillery, in which arms the French were particularly strong, had alone foiled all the efforts of Marshal Ney. For him to have awaited the onset of

their whole army in the morning, would therefore have been certain destruction ; and their advance, which was intended, must have taken Napoleon in reverse, and would already have exhibited on the plains of Fleurus the closing catastrophe reserved for the fields of Waterloo.

A fate so near and certain could hardly escape the observation even of Napoleon, who, ill as the previous battle had been fought, determined to make at least one effort for safety and for victory. The greater part of the village of Ligny happening, about eight o'clock, to be in possession of the French, he brought up the whole of his Guard, the greater part of which had till then been in reserve, and supporting them with a strong force of cuirassiers, ordered the whole to push through and round the village, and to advance directly upon the heights of Bry. The order was boldly executed : some of the troops rushed through the village, others passed to the right, and all, though sharply met, ascended the heights in gallant style, favoured by the storm of rain then pouring down, and by the darkness it occasioned.

The danger was now imminent ; for the Prussians having observed the advance of Count d'Erlon's corps along the Marbais road, of which we have presently to speak, had drawn their principal reserves to the right, at the same time that the mistake of a staff officer caused a brigade and a half, nearly all the remaining infantry, to be marched to the left, where they were never required. Three regiments of cavalry were the nearest troops at hand, and these Marshal Blücher instantly hurled against the enemy : some broke-in, some were repulsed, and the French cuirassiers arriving to the aid of the Guard, drove back the assailants in confusion. Blücher rallied them in person, and again led them forward to

the charge. In the *mêlée* that followed, his horse, a beautiful grey charger, the gift of the Prince Regent of England, was mortally wounded; and making a lofty bound, fell dead upon the ground at the very moment when the Prussian cavalry again gave way.

"Now, Nostitz, I am lost," said the gallant rider to his aid-de-camp, as he sunk beneath the dying steed. Count Nostitz who, in the confusion, had alone remained by his side, instantly sprung from his horse, and sword in hand stood over his fallen commander, while the whole body of French cavalry passed on totally unmindful of the group. Before, however, the Count could take advantage of the calm, and extricate the General from beneath the dead charger, the Prussians had turned upon their pursuers, and forced the cuirassiers to retrograde as fast as they had come; so that the whole of the broken rout again rushed past the fallen Marshal. As soon as the Prussians, who knew nothing of what had happened to their leader, arrived, Nostitz seized the reins of a non-commissioned officer's horse, and with the aid of the soldier placed the bruised and almost insensible commander in the saddle, and hurried him from the field. And time indeed it was: for the French were again advancing in full force; and, carrying everything before them, they soon crowned the central point of the long-disputed ground.

All hopes of retrieving the fate of the day vanished when Blücher left the field; for though the troops were still in good order, and still maintained the hamlet of Bry immediately in front of the French, as well as the other points contended for during the battle, the energy and unity of command were gone, and a retreat was resolved upon. Count Gneisenau directed the corps to fall back on Wavre; and as the French made no

attempt to impede the movement, it was executed in perfect security. Some of the troops already halted at Tilly, only three miles from the field; the left wing, under General Thielman, remained at Sombreff till day-break, and then retired to Gembloux, without being either assailed or pursued. Each army had lost about 12,000 men in killed and wounded; few or no prisoners were taken by either party; the field of battle, with about thirty dismounted guns, were the only trophies that remained in the hands of the victors. They were not more fortunate on other points.

The tidings that reached Brussels on the morning of the 15th, induced the Duke of Wellington to give the preparatory orders for the march of the army; and as soon as the certain direction of the French movement became known, the final order for their march on Quatre-Bras was issued. A numerous party had for the same evening been invited to a ball at the Duchess of Richmond's, and it was at first intended to put off the entertainment; but the Duke of Wellington not wishing to alarm the population of the city, requested that it might go on. His Grace attended himself, and conversed very freely about the approaching events. As the troops of the fifth division marched from Brussels at day-break, many of the officers, having had no time to change their clothes, fought, and some fell, in the very dress in which they had danced,—a circumstance that gave rise to the idle and oft-repeated tale, of the British army having been surprised while the officers were dancing.

Between one and two o'clock in the afternoon, the Duke of Wellington joined Marshal Blücher on the height of Bussy, where he remained for nearly an hour observing the development of the French forces; and

having satisfied himself that the main attack was directed against the Prussians, he set off to join his own army, intending, as soon as a sufficient number of troops should be assembled, to make a forward movement in favour of his ally. On reaching Quatre-Bras, however, he already found his troops engaged against Marshal Ney, who with 49,000 men had been detached to attack the British.

At half-past eleven o'clock A.M., the Marshal, whose forces were still at and in the rear of Gossellis, received orders to advance on Quatre-Bras, and overthrow whatever troops might oppose his march. Sharply pressing back General Perponcher's Belgian division, which he encountered beyond Frasne, Ney moved forward in consequence ; but as Gossellis is six miles from Quatre-Bras, and as the Belgians still defended the woods around, it was three o'clock before he was in measure to occupy the post, which was then already in possession of Picton's division.

The ground destined to become the scene of the sanguinary combat which followed, is traversed from north to south by the high road leading from Charleroi to Brussels, and from east to west by the road from Namur to Nivelles. A few houses placed on some slightly rising ground at the intersection of these roads, derive the name of Quatre-Bras from their situation. Three miles south is the village of Frasne ; nearer the position, and to the east of the road, the wood of Villers-Peruin ; to the west, almost in the angle of the cross roads, the wood of Bossu. Three hundred yards in advance of the hamlet is a small sheep-farm, and almost double the distance farther on the farm of Germioncourt. Several small rivulets traverse the ground from east to west, but give it no feature of strength. The value of Quatre-Bras consisted merely in the command of the Namur road

communicating with the Prussian army; as a military position it was altogether worthless.

The Nassau and Belgian troops had been forced from the wood of Villers-Peruin, and obliged to abandon the farm of Germioncourt. One of Marshal Ney's corps was still in the rear; but he had 20,000 infantry, 4000 cavalry, and 44 guns; and with these he made an onset upon the British and Hanoverian brigades of the fifth division, who stood on no ground of strength, and were almost destitute of cavalry and artillery; for seven of the twelve Belgian guns had already been taken or dismounted, and General Marlé's brigade of Belgian cavalry were driven from the field at the first onset.

It was now, therefore, that the British infantry were to be tried as no troops ever were before: exposed on level ground, they had to stand the shock not merely of superior numbers, but of cavalry, infantry, and artillery combined. Grape and musketry poured in upon their ranks; steel-clad horsemen thundered round the flanks of their battalions, but never broke a single square; death made fearful ravages in the close and serried masses, but shook not the courage of these dauntless soldiers, "each stepping where his comrade stood, the instant that he fell."

The French, however, had extended their right to the village of Piermont, commanding the Namur road; and the Duke of Wellington, aware of its importance, ordered Colonel, now Lieutenant-General, Sir Andrew Barnard, to retake it with the 1st battalion of Rifle corps—an order promptly executed by that officer, one of the ornaments of the army, and who commanded a regiment that never had its superior in any service.

On the right, the Dutch and Belgians still defended the wood of Bossu; and the arrival of the Brunswick

troops brought some aid to the hardly-pressed infantry; but 400 hussars and a squadron of lancers could not face the numerous cavalry that gave the French the command of their movements in the field. A slight forward movement on both sides of the road led to no result. On the contrary, the 42d, which was in front, having neglected to form square in time to oppose a charge of cavalry, saw their colonel slain, and their two leading companies broken and cut down.

The fire of musketry and artillery was still severe along the whole front; but the French, shaken perhaps by the resistance they had experienced, made no forward movement; and though it was now six o'clock, had gained no advantage over the British. Nor had they yet been more successful on the right; for the heavy and incessant roar of artillery booming over from the direction of Ligny, told that the long-continued battle was still undecided, as the sound remained stationary, and fell neither louder nor fainter on the anxiously listening ear. At this moment Marshal Ney received a letter from Napoleon, calling upon him to make every exertion in his power, and declaring that "the fate of France was in his hands." Thus urged, the Marshal placed himself at the head of Jerome Bonaparte's division of infantry, and leading them on with his usual intrepidity, drove the Belgians from the principal part of the wood of Bossu, and forced back the Brunswick battalions that flanked the road. It was in vain that the gallant Duke of Brunswick charged these troops at the head of his Black Hussars; the French were too strong, and their light cavalry arriving to the aid of their infantry, threw the Brunswickers, and pursued them along the road, till arrested by the fire of the 92d Highland regiment, which completely severed the

pursuing column in two ;—the leading horsemen, some of whom actually got mixed with the Duke's staff, falling or escaping between the interval of the squares, the others retiring rapidly beyond the reach of the infantry fire.

But the battle still raged, and Valmy's cuirassiers came on to the charge. Forcing their way through the intervals of the masses, they advanced as far as the hamlet ; but the daring effort could lead to no result. From all quarters the fire poured in upon these bold horsemen ; who, unable to break a single body of infantry, were forced to retire with great loss,—their leader, Count Valmy, only escaping on foot after his horse had been killed under him. Still charge followed charge, and Pirie's brigade of cavalry were next sent forward to atone for the failure of their predecessors ; but it was in vain—the same conduct led to the same fate. Exposed to a heavy fire, the horsemen unable to shake the steady formations of the infantry, sought shelter behind their own line.

In the wood, however, the French were still gaining ground. On the plain their artillery was carrying havoc into the ranks of the Allies ; and though repulsed in their attacks, the advantage was still on their side, when the 3d division, under General Alten, reached the field and drove the enemy's infantry from the open space between the wood and the road. They were in line, and, ascending a slight eminence, when suddenly charged by cuirassiers who had been concealed by the inequality of the ground ; the horsemen dashed at the 69th regiment, who were completely ridden over, losing one of their colours in the combat. The 33d had time to form square, and were not charged, but suffered dreadfully from the fire of the hostile guns, that struck down nearly the whole of the

front face of the square before the regiment could find shelter from the deadly showers of grape poured in upon them.* This was the last transient gleam of success that gilded the Imperial eagles in the fields of Quatre-Bras; for reinforcements now poured in rapidly and soon turned the scales of battle. First came four British guns and three batteries of Brunswick artillery that brought most important aid: the gallant division of Guards followed. The enemy had carried the wood at the moment when these troops reached the ground; but General Cook, an officer of great talents and bravery, instantly attacked them with the first brigade, and being well supported by some Nassau battalions, recovered the important post after a severe and sanguinary struggle. Evening was now closing in, and the French having been repulsed on all points, Marshal Ney feeling the augmenting strength of the Allies pressing upon him, withdrew his broken troops to Frasne, where he took post for the night. He had lost about 5000 men in the action: an equal number had fallen on the part of the Allies, who had also to lament the loss of the Duke of Brunswick. The gallant Prince was killed by a grape-shot that shattered his right hand and pierced his left breast, while in the very act of desiring his men to lie down and shelter themselves from the fire to which he remained exposed. The victors

* So heavy was the fire of artillery that Lieutenant, now Major Read, and three grenadiers, were at one time alone left standing in the front face of the square of the 33d Regiment. This corps, which acted a distinguished part both at Waterloo and Quatre-Bras, was commanded by Colonel, afterwards General Elphinstone, who died a prisoner in the hands of the Affghans, and whose personal bravery was conspicuously displayed in both battles. Major Thain, his aid-de-camp, who fell on the retreat from Caboul, was then ensign and adjutant of the regiment, and was one of the most promising young officers in the service: he received two wounds at Waterloo.

advanced their line to Germioncourt, where they reposed from the toils of a combat which, following without rest or interval on a long march performed under a burning sun, may be considered as one of the most stern and trying ever fought by modern infantry.

The morning of the 16th June had seen 310,000 men, all in the pride of hope and strength, advancing from different points towards the plains of Fleurus. Peace still rested on the fruitful fields and noble woods that skirt the fertile banks of the Sambre and the Dyle. Leaves, grass and corn, refreshed and sparkling with the million dew-drops of early summer, presented from the heights of Bry a sight of beauty and repose, to which the scenes of the following morning offered a melancholy but too frequent contrast. The sun of the 17th of June rose on trampled harvests, scorched forests and on the smoking ruins of cottages and hamlets; it rose on heaps of broken arms, dismounted guns, overturned carriages,—on lines of cheerless *bivouacs*, on dead and dying steeds, on trains of wounded, and on the naked, mangled and unburied corses of ten thousand valiant men, who had fallen in the fierce and fruitless strife which we have already described. The first was a scene on which angels might have gazed with satisfaction; the second was one that fiends alone could behold unmoved.

Five-and-thirty thousand men had been killed and wounded in the battles of Fleurus and Quatre-Bras; Napoleon had been victorious in the principal action; yet so feeble and ill-conceived was his entire plan of operation, and so boldly had the Allies atoned for the absence of Bülow on one side and the tardy arrival of part of the British on the other, that his situation had in no respect been improved by his temporary success.

He had not contended against one of the Allied armies before it could be supported by the other, but had contended against both armies,—losing on one side nearly as much as he gained on the other. He had not separated the Prussians from the British ; and so little had his adversaries been crippled, that on the morning of the 17th they already arranged, as we shall presently see, plans of offensive operations for the following day.

Quatre-Bras presented an animated scene on the morning of the 17th June. Some 60,000 men flushed with victory and expecting every moment to be led on to new triumphs, were assembled in the woods, fields and roads round the narrow battle-ground of the previous day. The defeat of the Prussian army was not yet known, as the officer sent with the intelligence to the Duke of Wellington had been killed on the road. It was not till seven o'clock that this important information reached head-quarters, when the preparatory orders for a retreat were immediately issued. The news of this disaster and its immediate consequence acted with chilling effect on the spirits of the army : all buoyancy and excitement of feeling vanished at once ; and faces radiant with hopes and smiles a few minutes before, were suddenly overshadowed with gloom and disappointment. The *morale* of the British troops, and of the old soldiers of the German Legion, was not perhaps affected by a reverse that certainly damped their spirits : the Peninsular war had taught them to trust only to their own exertions, and not to doubt of victory because their Allies had been defeated. Not so the new German levies : the name of Napoleon rising from his former fall like a giant refreshed, pressed heavily on their minds. The scenes of Jena and Austerlitz alone floated before their imagination, to the total exclusion of the brilliant vic-

tories subsequently gained by their own countrymen. This depression of spirits caused the old legionaries to be exceedingly witty during the march, at the expense of their young countrymen who were exposed to many good-humoured soldierly jests for not knowing that, in the English army, a retreat was always the sure forerunner of victory: few suspected, perhaps, how completely their prophetic jests were to be verified.

The value of a good corps of officers was strongly illustrated on this occasion. The new Hanoverian levies were, as before stated, young and inexperienced soldiers, who here made their first appearance in the field under circumstances that tried even veterans. The retreat of the 17th, following immediately on the severe action of the 16th, naturally shook their confidence to an extent that might have proved fatal; but the officers of these corps were mostly men of family, character and education, who, notwithstanding their own gloomy forebodings,—for in general they already looked upon the cause as desperate,—rallied the spirits of their troops, and set the men an example of gallantry that was followed in a manner as honourable to the commanders as to the subordinates. The Brunswick troops, in all respects as brave as the Hanoverians, had behaved very gallantly during the previous day's battle; but the fall of their Prince, together with the changed aspect of affairs, cast a shade over them, the consequence of which it was impossible to foretell. There had also been a little grumbling on the part of the old Peninsulars of the 5th division, about the conduct of some Nassau light infantry. And to crown all these unpleasant doubts, the behaviour of the Belgians had completely ruined them in the estimation of their Allies. Hun-

dreds had already left the ranks, and relating extravagances in their fear, spread alarm all over the country.

During the action, an English officer* was directed to lead two regiments of Belgian light cavalry against a body of French dragoons, that had come fairly within reach. The officer, being a good French scholar, addressed *les braves,* and desired them to strike home for the honour of their country and of their pretty countrywomen. He was answered with loud cheers, and all giving spurs to their horses, galloped towards the enemy. The French, in accordance with their strange notion of cavalry tactics, halted to receive the onset, which, on this occasion, proved harmless enough; for no sooner did the assailants perceive that the enemy did not turn, than they turned to a man, followed at speed by the French, who gave chase the moment they saw their adversaries fly. The English officer, who was in advance of the party, escaped only by the speed of his horse. In what estimation these unfortunate allies were held on the morning after the action, may be judged of by the following anecdote:—"Ha, General!" said the Prince of Orange, rather indiscreetly, perhaps, to a Spanish officer well known in the British army, "what would Spanish troops have done under yesterday's fire?" "I know not what they would have done," replied the other, with a look of old Castilian pride; "but certain it is, that they could not have behaved worse than the subjects of your royal father."

With spirits thus variously affected by past recollec-

* Captain Barrallier, of the Quartermaster-General's staff, one of the most zealous, gallant, and ill-used men in the army. He afterwards died a captain of the African corps at Accra, on the coast of Guinea.

tions and passing events, the army commenced their retreat on the morning of the 17th of June. They were divided into three columns. The first, under Lord Hill, proceeded by the Nivelle road to Braine-la-Leud; the second, by the same road to Halle; and the third, by the Charleroi road through Jenappe, direct to Mont St Jean. It was about eleven o'clock when the first battalion of the Rifles, and the second light battalion of the King's German Legion, the last of the infantry, left the ground. The old riflemen in retiring through a splendid body of cavalry, not a man of whom they had seen during the battle, could not refrain from indulging in some of the old Peninsular jests about the followers of the army. The cavalry proved however next day, that they could atone for their unwilling absence, and work double tides when opportunity offered.

At nine o'clock in the morning, the Duke of Wellington had received a letter from Marshal Blücher, announcing that, though defeated, he would be ready to take the field again as soon as his troops had been supplied with bread and cartridges. To this communication, the Duke replied that he would accept a battle at Mont St Jean, in front of the wood of Soignis, if he could rely on the support of two Prussian corps. The characteristic answer of the old Marshal is well known. He instantly declared his resolution of marching to the aid of the British, not with two corps only, "but with his whole army." And it was on this assurance that the battle of Waterloo was determined upon.

We have now reached the last crisis in the fortunes of Napoleon; and if he deserves the boundless praise bestowed upon him for activity, energy, and a knowledge of the value of time, we must find him displaying conduct worthy of such gallant qualities, and adopting

measures suited to a moment of such vast importance. We must find him pressing back the Prussians with resistless force on one side, and holding fast the British on the other, ready to strike a decisive blow at these dangerous adversaries before they can again place themselves in communication with their retiring allies. All contemporary history calls upon us to look for vigour, promptness, and decision, from this boasted man; and yet here, in the very hour of fate, we look for them in vain. Here as at Smolensk, where the Russian army escaped defeat at Valutino Gora,—as at Dresden, when Vandamme's corps was destroyed in the gorges of Culm, Napoleon was tranquilly dictating *bulletins*, and on the present occasion announcing rather prematurely, his immediate arrival at Brussels.

He thus writes to the Minister of War: "The army is formed on the high road leading from Namur to Brussels, to which place the Emperor is at this moment about to proceed." In this arrangement the English troops are not honoured with a single thought, while the line of retreat of the Prussians was already lost sight of; for General Pajol, who in the morning was ordered to pursue them with a division of light cavalry, was sent along the Namur road; the very one they had not taken. At nine in the morning, Napoleon drove in his carriage to St Amand, followed by Marshal Grouchy, who was to command the troops destined to pursue the Prussians, and had been waiting for orders since seven o'clock. Arrived on the ground, the Emperor mounted his horse and rode over the battle-field; spoke to the wounded, and praised the conduct of the regiments that assembled, without arms, to cheer him as he passed. Having reached the heights of Bossu, he conversed with the Marshal, General Gerard, and others, on

the state of public opinion at Paris; discoursed at length about the Jacobins, the Chambers, and other matters totally unconnected with the operations in progress. Every minute was of value, but Napoleon knew it not. At length, and when noon was already past, intelligence reached him that the British were still at Quatre-Bras; and it was then only that he directed Marshal Grouchy to follow the Prussians: the order was a verbal one. "Put yourself in pursuit of the Prussians," he said; "complete their defeat by attacking them wherever you can find them. I go to join Marshal Ney with the troops I have here, and attack the English if they make a stand on this side of the forest of Soignis. You will correspond with me by the paved road leading from Namur to Quatre-Bras."*

There is not a word here about joining Napoleon in his attack on the English. No, Marshal Grouchy is only to overtake an army that, as he justly observed to Napoleon, would have sixteen hours the start of him, and the traces of which had already been completely lost; and he is then to beat an army of 80,000 or 90,000 men, an entire corps of which under Bülow, nearly as strong as Grouchy's whole force, had taken no share in the previous day's battle. It is very easy to give and afterwards to appeal to such orders; the question is, can they be carried into effect? At the very time when the Emperor was desiring Grouchy to enact all these wonders, the Prussians were already reforming their army at Wavre, and the British in undisturbed march towards Mont St Jean! Napoleon, who naturally wished the Prussians to fall back on Namur and Liege, never sus-

* Fragments Historiques Relatifs à la Campagne de 1815, par le Général Grouchy.

pected that they were preparing to join the British; for had Grouchy been originally desired to march upon Wavre and interpose between the Allied armies, as afterwards asserted in the St Helena Memoirs, he would not have been ordered to correspond with the Emperor by the Namur road, which would then have been absurdly circuitous, but by one of the direct roads leading from the Wavre to the Brussels road. Besides other circumstances to be mentioned at a proper time, the following characteristic anecdote related by Baron Müffling, shows how completely Napoleon deceived himself on this point. When on the 17th the French reached Jenappe, they found it reported that Blücher had marched on Wavre, with the intention of joining the British. Some officers of rank immediately communicated the rumour to the Emperor, who smiled at the intelligence; saying to the circle of Generals by whom he was surrounded: "The Prussian army is completely defeated, and cannot be assembled in less than three days. I have seventy-five thousand men, the British only fifty thousand: I shall attack and beat them. Brussels will receive me with open arms. The English opposition demand nothing better; they will raise their heads, and then farewell subsidies and coalitions." Here, as at Merry on the 23d February 1814, when he refused to believe in the arrival of Blücher's army, he could see only what best suited his own wishes.

The greatest error committed by the French commander during this entire campaign of errors, was that of allowing the British to retire unassailed from Quatre-Bras. Whether Marshal Ney could have held them fast till the arrival of Napoleon's army, is certainly a matter of doubt; but the attempt should at least have been made, as it offered the only chance of striking a blow

at them before they renewed their communication with the Prussians. It was broad day-light at three o'clock; by five, Napoleon should, in a well-commanded army, have been apprised of the presence of the enemy; and before ten, the head of the columns arriving by the Namur road might have threatened their left. The Duke of Wellington informed of this advance, would no doubt have retired sooner. The question then is, could Marshal Ney have held the British fast till Napoleon's arrival; or can a modern army break off an action at pleasure, and retire whenever it may feel disposed?

If we are to be guided solely by results, without ever going back to original causes and just principles, the answer to the latter part of our question will be in the affirmative. But we confess, that notwithstanding the numerous instances that may be brought forward in support of this opinion, we still look upon it as one of the many errors of the modern school of strategy. We do not see that either an individual or an army can leave off fighting and walk away at pleasure, unless the adverse party is equally tired of the combat, and ready to call, "Hold, enough!" The devices contrived for retiring by alternate divisions, or by échelon movements, are the mere puerilities of theoretical tacticians. A bold enemy who could not be arrested by an entire line, will never be arrested by the fractions of a line, or by half a line; on the contrary, he will or should push through the intervals, and take the standing divisions in reverse. Still less will he be arrested by a few skirmishers thrown out to mask a retrograde movement; and most of the so-called successful retreats have been accomplished only in consequence of the timidity or inability of the pursuing adversary. We are, of course, speaking very generally; for there are cases where a retreat can neither

be prevented nor molested. Cavalry, for instance, can always retire from infantry; and on broken ground infantry can easily retire from cavalry. But under ordinary circumstances, we do not see that an army should be able to break off a battle and effect a retreat before an enterprising adversary, often as the thing has been effected.

Gourgaud tells us, indeed, that Napoleon, indignant at the delay which had taken place, arrived at full gallop at Quatre-Bras, when it was raining in torrents. This last piece of information is a proof that he was many hours too late, for it only began to rain between two and three o'clock, just as the last of the British infantry were leaving Jenappe after about an hour's halt.

When the advanced-guard of the French cavalry issued from the above place, the Marquis of Anglesea directed the rear-squadron of the 7th Hussars to charge them. This attack, though received at a halt, completely failed; but the French, in attempting to follow up their success, were assailed by the 1st Life Guards, and driven back on the head of their own column. The failure of the Hussars was ascribed to the exhausted state of the horses, as the squadron had been skirmishing during the whole morning, and to the roads which at the moment were next to impassable. On such ground, therefore, the attack should not perhaps have been made with such troops.

The affair of Jenappe was the only one that took place during the retreat; and before eight o'clock in the evening all the troops had reached their intended position. As the rain still continued to fall, and as the evening was very gloomy, the French, not perceiving that the army had halted, or wishing perhaps to ascertain whether they had anything beyond a mere rear-guard in their front,

advanced in some force beyond La Belle Alliance. But being there saluted with a smart fire of artillery, their curiosity was satisfied; and after exchanging a few rounds both armies retired for the night.

We must now, before we proceed any farther, take a look at the Prussians, and having fairly established them in and about Wavre, shall venture to offer a few remarks on the operations already described. We left the defeated host retiring from Sombreff, after the French had carried the heights of Bry.

The confused torrent of retreat which, in the darkness of night, soon lost even the semblance of order with which it had commenced, recalled Blücher from the state of insensibility into which he had been thrown by the severity of his fall. The time-and-toil-worn frame of the old warrior had been severely shaken; but his mind remained firm, and soon recovered its usual vigour and elasticity. In a poor cottage by the road-side, where Gneisenau joined him during the night, he found the old Marshal alone awake in the midst of his slumbering suite, and already forming plans for another battle. "Hard blows these, Gneisenau; but we must just pay them back," were the first words he addressed to the chief of the staff, as the latter entered the apartment. In this spirit he continued to act; and it was this firmness and unyielding resolution, that by first animating those who immediately surrounded his person, communicated itself to the soldiers, and in a single day restored to a defeated army the confidence of victors. A general order was issued at Wavre on the morning of the 17th, detailing, without reserve, the loss of the battle. The cavalry were severely reprimanded for want of coolness and daring; and were desired to be in readiness to wipe out the stain thus brought upon their character: the

artillery were also censured; they were desired to advance in a more resolute manner towards the enemy, and not to be in haste to withdraw the guns on their being attacked. "It is better," said the order, "to lose a battery than to endanger a position by limbering up too soon." After bestowing great praise on the infantry for their conduct, this spirited document concluded with the following words, so characteristic of its author:—"I shall immediately lead you against the enemy; we shall beat him, because it is our duty to do so." It was further commanded that the army should march past the Field-Marshal in parade order, on the morning of the 18th; so that by the evening of the 17th, the camp had almost the appearance of an ordinary peace-station, in which the troops were preparing for a review.

We cannot withhold our tribute of admiration from the man who, though confined to a bed of suffering, thus swayed thousands by mere force of character and resolution, and again brought into compact shape and form the jarring and almost decomposed elements of which the Prussian army was then composed: it proves the vast power that moral energy can exercise over the minds of the many. The soldiers were mostly young men; numbers had been taken from provinces lately incorporated with the monarchy; having therefore no particular attachment to their new rulers, or confidence in their leaders. Their first trial had been, not only a most severe, but also an unsuccessful one; and although the retreat was commenced in good order, it had degenerated during the night, as such retreats too frequently do, into a complete rout. Stragglers from different corps spread far and wide over the country, carrying even to the banks of the Rhine, reports of the total destruction of the Allied armies. So situated and commanded were

the troops that, on the following morning, were to march to the aid of the British.

Observations.—Let us now, before we proceed with our narrative, offer a few remarks on the movements described, and on the statements subsequently made by Napoleon, and so blindly repeated by his admirers.

The exile of St Helena charges the unsatisfactory result of these first operations to the misconduct of Marshal Ney, who neglected, he says, to press forward and take possession of Quatre-Bras on the 15th, and disobeyed the orders sent him on the 16th, according to which he was to turn the right of the Prussian position by the Namur road. We think it can easily be shown that there is not a shadow of foundation for these unjust accusations advanced by Napoleon, with his usual disregard of truth, to screen his own errors at the expense of the gallant soldier who had forfeited life and fame in his cause.

And, first, of the Marshal's tardiness on the 15th. The corps under his command had been marching, manœuvring, and even partially fighting, since two o'clock in the morning; and though Solre-sur-Sambre, where they had encamped the previous night, is not more than twenty-six miles from Quatre-Bras, the roads were bad, and it was eight o'clock at night before the Marshal arrived with the advanced-guard at Frasne, three miles from the latter place. His troops had then been seventeen hours under arms; and it is the length of time soldiers thus remain encumbered and weighed down by the heavy load they have to carry, far more than the mere distance marched over, that tends to exhaust their strength. We therefore require better authority than the mere assertion of Napoleon, to suppose that

Marshal Ney was in condition to press on, and risk a night-action at Quatre-Bras, where he was liable to meet a large British force.

Let us now see how far the orders sent on the 16th will bear examination.

On comparing a great number of marches, it appears that an army of 40,000 men requires about eight hours to traverse, in average weather, a distance of fifteen miles, which may be called an average military day's march. And if we make the necessary allowance for the length of cavalry columns,—which are endless,—for the lumbering trains of artillery, for the intervals between the corps and divisions, as well as for the openings that owing to the most trifling obstacles are constantly taking place, such an army will need thirteen hours before it can be formed into position, ready for battle,—that is, if it has been marching upon a single moderately good road. Marshal Ney's corps formed the left of an army of about 130,000 men, which, divided into three columns, had performed two marches. Each column might be about 40,000 strong, but the centre column alone had traversed a good high road; the right and left columns had followed by-roads, one of which is described as having been very bad, while for the march of armies such roads are seldom very good. It is, therefore, no very unreasonable supposition to say, that Ney's troops could not have reached Quatre-Bras before the time specified.

Though the main body of the Marshal's forces were assembled at Gosselis on the morning of the 16th, several of his divisions were still far in the rear; and Count d'Erlon, with the first corps, had not advanced beyond Marchiennes-au-Pont. The cause of these troops being still so far behind we are unable to explain; but as Napoleon was at Charleroi, close at hand, he could

easily have made them advance at daybreak, had an early movement entered into his calculation. But of this we find no appearance in the Book of Orders; and though he sends two letters from Charleroi on the morning of the 16th, they make no mention of any rapid advance, nor do they say one word about the intended movement against the right flank of the Prussians by the Namur road: this was evidently an after-thought.

In the St Helena Memoirs, Napoleon tells us, however, that at half-past eleven o'clock the Marshal received orders to march on Quatre-Bras, overthrow whatever resistance he might there encounter, and then send 10,000 men and 28 pieces of artillery to turn the Prussian position at Bry. That is, the Marshal, whose main force was then at Gosselis, was to march six miles, draw up his troops for battle, overthrow the British,—though it happened that no French Marshal had yet succeeded in overthrowing a British force,—and was then to march seven miles farther and fight another battle against the Prussians! No one can say that this was absolutely impossible, but no one will maintain that it was altogether practicable. No appearance of this order is to be found in the book of the Major-General; and though it may have been delivered by word of mouth, it is not even alluded to when at two o'clock the flank movement is first mentioned. It is repeated at a quarter-past three o'clock, when Napoleon, finding that he was engaged against the whole of the Prussian army, urges Marshal Ney to fall upon their right flank, and aid him in completing their destruction. This letter, always triumphantly appealed to by French writers, is no doubt clear and distinct, as all military orders should be; and we propose to quote part of it, to contrast its style with that of others to which we shall have occasion to refer;

but though its import is clear, it is equally clear that its execution was impracticable. "His Majesty desires me to tell you, that you are instantly to manœuvre so as to turn the right of the enemy, to fall with full force upon their rear. This army"—Blücher's—"is lost if you act vigorously: the fate of France rests in your hands."

The French invariably print this last sentence in italics, though it is not, perhaps, very creditable to their idol to have risked the fate of France on a flank movement, which, however splendid it might be in conception, happened at the moment to be perfectly impracticable in point of execution; for the British army was in possession of the Namur road, along which it was to be made.

Napoleon belongs to the numerous class of men who constantly allow their boundless vanity to overcome their very moderate share of judgment. Doubts regarding the direction of the French movement had alone prevented the British army from being assembled at Quatre-Bras early on the morning of the 16th of June; and Napoleon had naturally reaped the benefit of the delay. But no imaginable cause, no impediment that the wildest fancy might be expected to conjure up, could prevent them from arriving in ample time to check the movement here commanded. If Napoleon could not foresee that the British would arrive at Quatre-Bras, he ought, by three o'clock, to have known that troops were in possession of the post; Marshal Ney had reconnoitred General Perponcher's forces at eight o'clock in the morning; and whether weak or strong, it was evident that they would be strongly supported. The field of battle was not more than eight miles distant from his own left; the country is perfectly open, and admits of being galloped over in a straight line from Fleurus to any part of the ground then occupied by Ney. But it

entered not into Napoleon's arrangements that the British should be at Quatre-Bras, and it could not therefore enter into his conception. We may, no doubt, expect in war that the enemy's arrangements will suffer from accidents and mistakes, as well as our own; but it is dangerous to rely on such precarious auxiliaries, for they may be playing their pranks on points exactly opposite to where we happen to require their aid: and to calculate on the absence of whole armies from their natural fields of action is, of course, pure extravagance.

French historians, carefully avoiding all accuracy of detail, tell us, however, that Marshal Ney should have acted more promptly and more vigorously, and should have occupied Quatre-Bras before the British. This, though easily said, was not so easy of execution. It is now admitted, that the first order directing the Marshal to advance on the 16th, was sent on the forenoon of *that day*, and only reached him at half-past eleven o'clock. He had then to assemble his troops, form them in columns of march, ready to deploy and engage an enemy who was opposing the advance, as the Belgians did beyond Frasne, and who might prove to be in force. Before attaining Quatre-Bras, it became necessary to make arrangements for attacking Perponcher, who had taken post, and presented cavalry, artillery, as well as infantry, in position. The Belgians were overthrown, and the advance continued; but the hand of time could not be arrested, and it was three o'clock before the French arrived at Quatre-Bras, exactly as Picton's division reached the same point from the opposite direction; and the army which effected this march in three hours cannot be accused of delay.

There is another circumstance connected with the actions of the 16th of June, or with the French accounts

of those actions, which deserves notice, as it proves either that the French leaders were men of very little capacity, or that very little credit is due to French historians. The latter all assert, that nothing saved the Prussian army from destruction but the non-arrival of the corps which Marshal Ney was to detach, in order to take their right wing in reverse. Yet, in the face of this, their own assertion, they as positively tell us of the arrival of the first corps under Count d'Erlon, which at five o'clock was within three miles of the French left on the Marbais or old Roman road,—a road leading directly into the rear of the Prussian army.

It appears that Colonel Forbin-Jason who, as before stated, was the bearer of Napoleon's order directing Marshal Ney to turn the Prussians by the Namur road, fell in with the 1st corps only then proceeding along the Charleroi road to join the Marshal at Quatre-Bras. The Colonel told Count d'Erlon the object of his mission, and recommended that the 1st corps should immediately carry the Emperor's orders into effect ; and by the Marbais road it could be effected without experiencing any interruption from the British. The Count entered into these views, changed the direction of his march accordingly, and was at five o'clock within three miles of the left wing of the French army. Now this arrival, which would have been the most fortunate event that could possibly have occurred to a General capable of availing himself of so happy a circumstance, actually, if we believe Gourgaud and others, helped to save the Prussian army. The necessity of ascertaining who these 20,000 men were, that without sending notice or being perceived by any of the French light troops, had thus come within ten minutes' gallop of the left wing, retarded the attack on Ligny for two hours ! Why these valuable

troops were not received with loud cheers, directed to bear right down upon Bry, in order to aid the very attack which it is pretended their arrival retarded, Gourgaud takes good care not to tell us: he wisely leaves them where he found them, and says nothing more about the matter. Others, however, wishing to manage better, do worse. Berton brings them close up to the army, and Vaudoncourt makes the leading division under Darute take a share in the action, and makes the rest vanish again by an order from Marshal Ney who is seven miles off, and that too without telling Napoleon, who is close at hand, a single word about the matter!

The approach of D'Erlon's corps was observed from the Prussian position, and induced Blücher to move his reserves to the right—a circumstance that in some measure caused the loss of the battle. The little communication that seems to have existed between the French corps and the tardy delivery of orders, is also a circumstance deserving attention. The letter of which we have here spoken was despatched from before Fleurus at a quarter past three, and only reached Marshal Ney at six o'clock in the evening, though the distance from one point to the other is not above eight miles. During the battles of Ligny and Quatre-Bras, messengers passed every half-hour between the English and Prussian armies.

As it is usual for French writers to speak of the battle of Ligny as evincing the highest military genius on the part of Napoleon, we shall here say a few words in examination of such lofty praise.

Napoleon tells us himself, that the right of the Prussian army was completely exposed, and that their front was strong. Yet do we find him, with singular inconsistency, attacking the strong front, and leaving the weak right, which was nearer his line of march, totally

unassailed. We also find him sending the greater part of his cavalry to confront the Prussian left, where the large village of Sombreff, the hamlets of Tongrin, Tongrenelle, and Mont-Potriau, together with the intersected nature of the ground, rendered it impossible for them to make any impression, or to follow up any advantage they might have gained: and all this when the ground on the Prussian right was perfectly open and well suited for cavalry, in which Napoleon's superiority principally consisted, as he had by his own showing at least 15,000 horsemen present in the field.

The French, as before stated, had gained advantages over the Allies by the accidental absence and tardy arrival of some British and Prussian corps. But time was still precious, and this precious time Napoleon completely threw away by attacking the villages in front of the Prussian army, instead of attacking the army itself. During upwards of four hours the battle was nothing more than a repetition of these assaults, a cannonade from position to position, and a wild *tirailleur*-fight in the villages and along the ravine that separated the two armies. When after this useless waste of men and time, the Guards at last carried the heights of Bry, it was nearly dark; the strength of the army was exhausted, and victory could no longer be rendered available.

Unless where it is absolutely indispensable, there is no folly equal to that of attacking villages or buildings with modern infantry, who are totally unsuited to such a mode of fighting. It gives the assailed all the advantages of stone-walls and strong positions; and every house is, when properly defended, a strong position against infantry. Yet was the system of attacking posts and villages, instead of armies, constantly resorted to by Napoleon and the French Marshals, though in

ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the villages that seemed to form the sole object of contest might, as at Ligny, have been passed or turned without danger or difficulty.

The weaker party and those who act on the defensive, will naturally seek to make the most of whatever can by any possibility impede the enemy, nor dare they permit an attacking foe to establish himself near their flank or front; but this is no reason why the assailants should waste against stone-walls the strength that can be decisively employed only against men. At Fuentes d'Onor the British army stood, after the right wing was thrown back, on perfectly open and level ground, one point only resting on the strong village in question; yet was that strong point constantly attacked, while the army was left totally unassailed. At Albuera, the French employed the whole of Godinot's division of infantry in the attack of the village that gives its name to the battle; yet when evacuated by Alten's brigade it proved of no use whatever, for the battle was fought and decided on open ground at the other extremity of the field, where an entire division of infantry might possibly have turned the fate of the day. Frederick II. strictly forbade the employment of infantry in attacks of posts and villages, when it could possibly be avoided. Marlborough did not, at the celebrated battle of Blenheim, wait to take the village of that name, situated in the very centre of the French position. He attacked the army itself; and when it was routed, the troops in Blenheim surrendered as a matter of course.

This was the proceeding of a man of great military genius, possessing also the mental courage necessary for acting up to his high conceptions. But second-rate men, when commanding brave and numerous armies,

think only of their baggage and imaginary fame. They try to steal victory, or to impose upon a timid adversary by partial actions, by the capture of particular points, to which some fancied importance is attached. There is neither the genius to conceive, nor the courage to execute great plans, that in their very development carry victory along with them. A combined onset is never thought of: its dangers alone float before the imagination of the feeble. Battles are thus fought by skirmishers, while armies remain in reserve, literally to feed the fire; to come, like the wounded Curatii, successively and not simultaneously into action, to meet the fate of these brother warriors, or achieve victory by continued sacrifices offered up at the shrine of the Moloch deity of battle. Nor need we wonder that ordinary human nature,—that men of merely mortal clay, should pause before placing the highest stakes of combat on a single cast of the iron die. It is not merely the blood of the brave which is to be shed in torrents, and vainly perhaps,—not merely the appalling sufferings to be inflicted on thousands; but the honour, interest, and possibly the very fate of nations that is to be risked; and the mind of man, when not absolutely callous, strives to recoil from the terrible responsibility.

If the plan of operation, which on his own authority we have ascribed to Napoleon, is anything more than an after-thought, devised for the purpose of giving to an enterprise undertaken solely in reliance on fortune and on the exertions of a brave and numerous army, the appearance of a well-calculated military expedition, it is very possible that the total want of discrimination which he displayed in estimating the character of his adversaries, may have assisted to lead him into the glaring errors which we have pointed out. No man capable of

analyzing human character, and able to foresee the future conduct of individuals by their previous actions, would ever have suspected that the deep sagacity of Blücher, proved as often in caution as in boldness, in retreat as in advance, was all at once to degenerate into simple foolhardiness; and that having numerous allies at hand, he would rush into battle without waiting or even asking for their aid. The man who foiled Napoleon and all his Marshals, by stealing the celebrated march on Wartenburg, and then forcing the passage of the Elbe in the face of a French army; who in the following campaign planned and executed the admirable movement upon Laon, which led to the final battle that in 1814 struck the crown from the head of the "bastard Cæsar" —was surely not to be looked upon as a mere foolhardy hussar.

Equally erroneous was it to suppose that the system pursued by the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsula was, as a matter of course, to be followed in the Netherlands, where his situation and that of his army were so totally different. In Spain, the British army could calculate only on their own strength and resources; nothing else was to be depended upon. In the Netherlands they could calculate on the Dutch government, as far as its power extended. And the systematic caution which was good generalship by the side of Cuesta, and the imbecile and presumptuous leaders of the rabble armies of Spain, on whom not a shadow of reliance could ever be placed, would have been weakness and timidity by the side of Blücher and his Prussians, who could be depended upon in every extremity. The Duke of Wellington marched to the assistance of these Allies the moment he knew the direction the hostile movement had taken; and it was only in full reliance on their sup-

port that he accepted battle at Waterloo. With Spanish Allies he would most assuredly have acted differently, and would have marched and fought only in reliance on what his own army could effect. But of all this Napoleon saw nothing; he naturally wished to fight only one enemy at a time, and did not perceive that he was perfectly certain of having both upon his hands.

In his account of the campaign, the ex-Emperor also tells us that the superior composition of the French army more than overbalanced the numerical advantage of the Allies. "Allowing," he says, "one Englishman to be equal to one Frenchman, a Frenchman is still equal to two Prussians, Hanoverians, or soldiers of the Confederation." The fact is, however, that in war a Frenchman never was equal to an Englishman, whether on the land or on the ocean; as the history of our countless battles from Cressy to Waterloo amply attests. The French are a valiant people, none more so; but it may not be valour alone which decides in the battle-field: and calm composure is perhaps a very essential military quality, of which the bravest have at times been deficient. This is not, however, the place to examine the question, and we only state a fact sufficiently proved by the sanguinary annals of both countries. Nor was a French soldier ever equal to two German soldiers, or superior to one when matched in fair trial. The veteran army which fought under Napoleon in 1815, the finest French army that ever took the field, was, in the mass, perhaps superior to the young German Landwehr troops of Blücher and Wellington; but the battle of Ligny shows that this superiority was not of a very decided character, for with equal numbers the French gained the slightest possible advantage.

It is usual to say that the Allied commanders, though

ultimately victorious, were surprised by Napoleon at the opening of the campaign. We do not see how such a charge can be made out, considering that it was altogether optional with them to fight or not, exactly as they pleased; and if they fought, it was because they thought themselves fully equal to the combat: whether they were right or wrong in this respect is a different question. The final resolution to accept battle was formed at two o'clock, when the Duke of Wellington, satisfied that the main body of the French were actually marching on Fleurus, parted from Marshal Blücher on the heights of Bry. During the whole of the forenoon it was in their power to retire to Wavre and Waterloo, as they did on the 17th, or still farther to the rear if necessary: a movement that Napoleon could not have followed to any distance without exposing his communication with France, and giving time to the Austrians and Russians to come into action. The British and Prussian armies could also have manœuvred as the Allies manœuvred in 1813; and though such operations are never free from danger, occasioned by miscalculation and mismanagement, they were here of the simplest kind: for the circle of action was narrow, the distances small, the communications free, while safe retreats were open in every direction.

The resolution to fight adopted on this occasion by the British and Prussian commanders was proud, soldier-like and patriotic, and fully evinced the manly confidence which the Generals placed in themselves and their troops. But though victory richly crowned their judgment and efforts, it cannot absolve them from the charge of having risked the fate of Europe on the issue of a battle. They certainly had a superiority of numbers, and most of the other fair chances for victory on their side; but

modern tactics always leave so vast a field open to the frolics of Fortune, that her goddesship might, nevertheless, by some of her *capriccios*, have frustrated the best combinations of the wise and the noblest efforts of the brave. She had just done so at New Orleans; and Waterloo, like all modern battles, left "ample room and verge enough" for the exertion of her fantasies. Without a battle, the result of the campaign was certain; for Napoleon's ruin was inevitable if the Austrian and Russian armies came into operation while the British and Prussians remained unbroken. To give battle was therefore to give him a chance, however slight that chance might be; and the resolution to fight, if looked upon in a purely military and strategical point of view, abstracted altogether from the feelings that would naturally exercise an influence over high-spirited men, was, we suspect, an error of the very first magnitude.

The cause of this great deviation from the just principles of strategy, we confess ourselves unable to explain. It must either be sought for in the politics of cabinets that so often exercise a pernicious influence over the very field-operations of armies, or in the personal character of the Allied commanders.

Blücher, it is well known, placed more reliance on what could be effected by himself and his army, than on the results to be anticipated from great combined operations. He hated the Russian commanders, who had so often thwarted his best concerted plans during the former campaigns, and mistrusted the Austrian cabinet. He was, besides, anxious to fight, particularly by the side of the British, and deemed an Anglo-Prussian army altogether invincible. The Duke of Wellington was of course bound, both in honour and in policy, to assist his ally, who sooner or later would most likely have fought

without such aid. And it was, perhaps, excusable in one who had successively conquered nearly all Napoleon's Marshals, to wish for an opportunity of measuring swords with the mighty master himself. The time also of these events must be taken into account. The feebleness of successive coalitions, occasioned by the folly, jealousy and discordant views of cabinets, had, during five-and-twenty years of strife, brought countless evils over Europe. The failure of so many plans of combined operations, owing to the presumption, ignorance, timidity, or incapacity of the commanders of Allied armies and contingents, had during the same period deluged Europe with the blood of her bravest sons. And it was at the end of this long and melancholy drama that high-minded men had to determine whether they would trust boldly to the arms of the bold, or depend upon the sagacity of coalitions backed by combined armies, rendered almost unwieldy by the very weight of their own numbers. Who then shall wonder, if at such a moment they cast the dictates of mechanical rules aside, and trusted to fortune and the sword?

CHAPTER IV.

BATTLE OF WATERLOO: DEFEAT OF THE FRENCH, AND PERSEVERING PURSUIT OF THE PRUSSIANS. NAPOLEON LEAVES THE ARMY, AND RETURNS TO PARIS: OBSERVATIONS ON THE MOVEMENTS DESCRIBED, AND ON THE ACCUSATIONS PREFERRED BY THE EMPEROR AGAINST MARSHAL GROUCHY.

THERE are events in modern as well as in ancient history which, by universal admission, have exercised so vast an influence on human destiny, that all proofs of their importance would be as superfluous as a regular train of reasoning brought forward to show the beauty of virtue or the brightness of honour. Foremost in the small number of these memorable occurrences stands the battle of Waterloo. Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the wisdom and policy of the contending nations,—whatever may be thought of the talents, character, or conduct of the respective leaders,—whatever parties or factions may think or say that Europe lost or gained by the result,—the greatness of the action itself can never be doubted or disputed. It closed by one tremendous and earth-shaking effort the mighty volcano of revolution which had spread desolation over so many countries, and left the few that chance had spared, in constant dread of being in their turn also overwhelmed by the fiery visitation.

With peace it again restored confidence to Europe:

it quelled, if it could not at once extinguish, the turbulent passions that a quarter of a century of strife had fostered. An entire generation of fierce and daring men, who, born to an inheritance of war, hated that tranquillity which deprived them of their occupation, sunk into obscurity, and were for years tamed into silence by the very echoes of its thunder; as birds of prey sink down before the tornado of the tropic, and remain crouched on the earth long after the fury of the tempest has passed away. This applies not alone to all classes of soldiers who reap the smallest share of reward for supporting the hardships and facing all the dangers of war; it applies to the thousands of vain, grasping, and ambitious men, who in times of constant change and excitement hope to obtain rank, wealth and distinction, by the aid of fortune, agitation, or intrigue; instead of seeking for the attainment of honourable objects, by toil, learning and industry,—the only roads left open to exertion in times of tranquillity. The battle of Waterloo changed the pursuits and checked the very hopes in which such a generation had been reared: a circumstance that accounts unfortunately too well for the torrent of invectives which, to the discredit of the age, was heaped upon the heads of the victors.

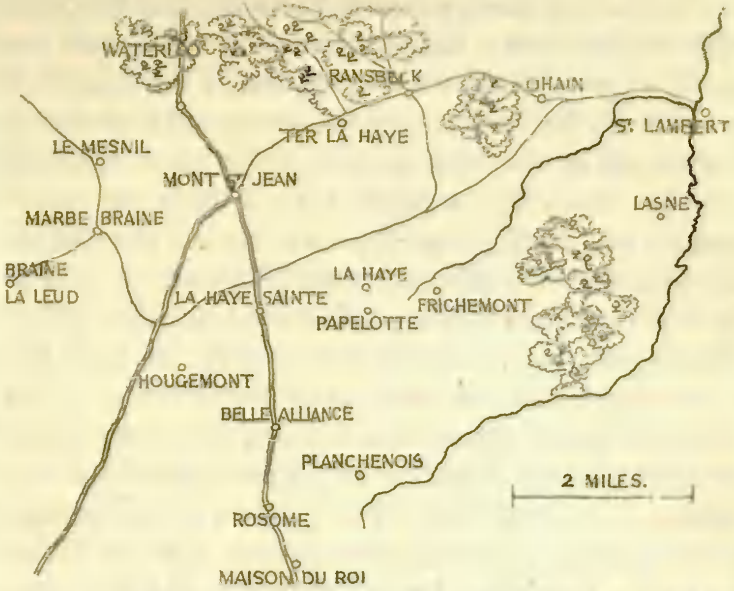
The 18th of June 1815,—a day destined to cast so brilliant a lustre on the military annals of Britain,—broke slowly and gloomily through the heavy mass of watery clouds that in every direction overhung the horizon: nature seemed almost anxious to withhold the light destined to shine on so sad a scene of human destruction. The rain, which had continued to fall during the night, still came down in torrents; and many thought, and some naturally hoped perhaps, that there would be no battle. It gradually ceased, however, as the

morning advanced; and by nine o'clock the day was clear enough to show that both armies were in position, and that an action was inevitable. The men who had escaladed Badajoz, and stormed St Sebastian, had infused into all who at that period wore the British uniform, a portion of the gallant spirit which achieved such heroic deeds; and soldiers so animated could certainly dread no foes, however numerous and renowned. But it must be confessed that the fame of Napoleon, the skill with which he was supposed to prepare his plans, and the mighty power with which he was always known to strike decisive blows, occasioned even in the boldest a degree of doubt and anxiety respecting the result of the contest, that had never been known on former occasions. If it checked the usual buoyancy and elasticity of feeling,—and we write even this in doubt,—it injured in nothing the stern and unbending resolution that yields in no extremity.

The battle-ground of Waterloo may be termed a perfectly open and undulating plain. The British position ran along the upper crests of one of these undulations; and on the opposite side of a valley, varying from 500 to 800 yards in breadth, the French had taken post on a similar ridge. It was, of course, within ordinary, and in some places almost within point-blank range of artillery. For our own and for the reader's convenience, we shall suppose an observatory placed against the end of the farm-house of Mont St Jean, on the Charleroi road, and exactly in rear of the British army; and having there established ourselves in a situation

> "————whence the eye
> The memorable field may best descry,"

we shall take a look at the ground before the clouds of smoke hide field and combatants alike from our view.



Immediately in our front to the left of this road, which runs at right angles through both positions, and separates the right of the French and the left of the British from their respective armies, stands Picton's division, having the first battalion of the rifles and two Belgium brigades in first line. It is supported by Sir John Lambert's brigade, posted close to Mont St Jean; and in the hollow a little farther to the left stands Ponsonby's brigade of heavy cavalry. The two next brigades of light cavalry on the Wavre road—the nearest under General Vandeleur, and the other under Sir Hussey Vivian—form the extreme left. Till the arrival of the Prussians this wing is without support; completely *en l'air*, according to the French expression; but owing to the open nature of the ground, easily supported, or even thrown back if necessary.

On the right of the Charleroi road rests the left of the 3d division, under Sir Charles Alten. The household brigade of cavalry, under Lord Edward Somerset, together with some Belgian troops, are in second line. On the right of the third division stands the first, under General Cook: it is composed exclusively of British Guards, all in first line, as best befits their fame and station. They are supported by a body of Nassau troops; and the light cavalry we behold in the rear, are the brigades of Dörenberg and Ahrenschild. To the right of General Cook's division, the position takes a sweep to the front, and then very abruptly falls back to the right, thus deviating, in the first bend, some twenty or thirty degrees to the front, and in the second, some five-and-forty degrees to the rear, from the original direction of the line. The extreme right, composed of Dutch troops under General Chassé, rests on Braine-la-Leud. The second British division, under Sir Henry Clinton and Colonel Mitchell's brigade of the fourth division, occupy the space between Cook's and Chassé's divisions. In the rear of these troops are Sir Colquhoun Grant's brigade of cavalry, two squadrons of Brunswick lancers, together with the Brunswick infantry in second line.

The old-fashioned country-house, with its orchard, garden, and offices, situated in the hollow in front of where Cook and Clinton's divisions meet, is the so-called Chateau of Hougemont. It is occupied by one battalion of Brunswick troops, and by the light companies of the Guards, under Colonel Macdonnell of Glengarry, of the Coldstream regiment. They have been exerting themselves to place the mansion and offices in a defensive posture. The little farm-house with its barn, stable, and two small gardens, adjoining the Charleroi road, in

front of Picton's right and Alten's left, and nearly half-way across the valley, is La Haye Sainte, occupied by the 2d light battalion of the King's German Legion. Here also preparations for defence have been made. The hamlets in front of the extreme left are La Haye and Papelotte; they are now held by some Belgian troops under the young Prince of Weimar, but are too distant to afford any shelter to the position.

Behind us is the forest of Soignis. It is traversed by the Brussels road, equal in breadth to three ordinary roads, as well as by the Braine-la-Leud, Ter-la-Haye, and other minor roads; and being besides perfectly free from underwood, and everywhere passable for men and horses, it not only affords a good second position along the verges of the wood, should the army be forced to fall back from the first; but offers in case of reverse the best possible security for retreat: nothing but a regular fortress can do so more effectually.

On the high ground immediately in our front, also adjoining the Charleroi road, is the public-house called La Belle Alliance, near which Napoleon takes his stand during the greater part of the battle.

Twelve miles to our left, but concealed by woods and rising ground, lies Wavre, whence the Prussians marched early in the morning, so that their arrival may be hourly expected. If we make a half-face from our left to our front, we look in the direction of Sart-a-Valhain, where Grouchy arrives at half-past eleven o'clock after a morning's march through very deep roads. The place is eighteen miles distant from the field of battle, and the French corps are, as Napoleon knows from letters received and answered in the morning, marching on Wavre, and not on Mont St Jean; so that there is no possibility of their arriving in time to take a share in the action. To

our right, at the distance of about twelve miles, is Halle, where a Belgian division, a strong brigade of British infantry, and two regiments of Hanoverian cavalry, remain stationary during the day. Their object is to cover Brussels against any detached corps of the enemy.

From this view of the field, we perceive that the British army is perfectly open to attack along its whole front. The position offers everywhere good fighting-ground on which all arms can act to equal advantage. The posts of Hougemont and La Haye Sainte can do little more than defend themselves, and are too small to protect any extent of the line. They are, of course, unprovided with artillery; so that all the flanking fire they can throw out will not, as we shall see, arrest an advancing enemy even for a moment. The rear declivity of the ridge on which the troops stand, affords to the masses some shelter from the enemy's fire; it is the only advantage which they derive from the ground. If we trace the front of this position from Braine-la-Leud to where Sir Hussey Vivian's brigade is posted on the extreme left, the distance may measure about three miles; but the chord of this irregular arc will of course be considerably shorter.

Including Sir John Lambert's brigade, and some detachments that only joined the army in time to take a share in the battle of the 18th, we have estimated at 78,000 men the *disposable* forces under the Duke of Wellington's command on the 16th June. And if we deduct from this number 5000 lost at Quatre-Bras, 12,000 left at Halle, and allow only 1000 for detachments, stragglers, and other casualties, it leaves us exactly say 60,000 men, of whom rather more than one-half, 32,000 perhaps, are British troops and soldiers of the King's

German Legion, present under arms.* Two hundred and ten guns are in position and reserve, together with a rocket-brigade which, for reasons we do not know, only threw a few rockets towards the end of the battle.

If our previous statement is correct, Napoleon must have 75,000 men in the field; and the entire plain, from Mont Plaisir to the woods of Frichemont, is swarming with troops. The Emperor, to gratify his pride of strength, to encourage his own troops, or to intimidate his enemies, has drawn up his army in parade-order. It is a splendid sight indeed, but dearly purchased at two hours' expense, when every minute is of value. In the third chapter of this Book, we said that the French crossed the Sambre with 130,000 men; that is, with 8000 more than Napoleon himself allows to have been present. And if we deduct from these 17,000 men lost in the actions of Quatre-Bras and Ligny, 31,000 detached under Grouchy, and the division of Gerard 3000 strong, left by mistake about Fleurus, it gives us 78,000 men, which we may call 75,000,—a number that comes singularly near the estimate formed by most British officers who had fair opportunities of judging. Grouchy's corps was accompanied by 108 pieces of artillery: it leaves about 240 guns present with the French army at Waterloo. The enemy's ground is perfectly clear and open; he can move his masses from one point to the other without the least obstruction.

His army is all assembled—perfectly in hand—every corps is within reach and call. There is nothing to prevent an ordered movement from being promptly and

* The author cannot specify exactly the force left at Halle; but believes that he has the best possible authority for estimating at 60,000 men, the strength of the army actually present in the field on the morning of the 18th of June.

immediately executed. No miscalculation of time and distance, or the want of active co-operation on the part of the subordinates, can be pleaded; and none of the evils to which extended and combined operations are liable need here be dreaded. Defeat must now be ascribed only to inferior skill on the part of the leader, or inferior discipline and gallantry on the part of the troops.

The sun is already high in heaven; and wherefore tarries Napoleon, so often termed the thunderbolt of war? A large Prussian force is on his right,—it may be in communication with the British, and is commanded by Blücher, who never tarries,—wherefore, then, this long delay? Every hour must prove a clear gain to the Allies, and a loss to the French. Will the gallantry of the soldiers redeem the tardiness of the leader?

The French artillery were already in position, and it was verging towards twelve o'clock, when a gun, fired from a British battery on the right, gave the first signal of battle. The shot was aimed with ominous precision; it made a momentary gap in one of the three columns, composed of six battalions, which Prince Jerome had directed against the wood or orchard of Hougemont; but it arrested not the comrades of the fallen: and many a lofty head was to sink before those brave men were to shrink from the fight. They reach the verges of the wood, a wild fire of musketry instantly commences, and in a few minutes, the whole post is enveloped in smoke. The French artillery open in support of this infantry attack; the British reply; and the fire, augmenting like thickening peals of thunder, soon extends to the farthest extremity of both lines. It exceeded every thing of the kind the oldest soldiers had ever heard, and made the very earth shake for miles around the field.

Two divisions and a half, forming at the lowest estimate 12,000 men, were gradually brought forward to the attack of this post, which of itself was of no very material advantage to the assailants. It lay low, and had no commanding influence on the position, so that its capture could have *decided* nothing; whereas 12,000 men, when properly employed, may decide almost everything. The attacks on Hougemont continued, with short intervals, during the whole day. The wood, orchard and grounds, were frequently in possession of the enemy; but except on one occasion, when a few determined men pushed through the gate into the court, where they were killed by the fire of the Coldstream Guards, they were never able to force the enclosure that surrounded the buildings. The house and some of the offices were set on fire by howitzer-shells, but the burning ruins were still maintained by the gallant defenders. No feeble and temporary post of this nature ever sustained a succession of such long, fierce, and desperate attacks as Hougemont: the struggle for its possession only ended with the total defeat of the enemy.

The resistance encountered on this point rendered other measures necessary. Small parties of horsemen, suspected at last to be Prussians, had been discovered on the heights of St Lambert, about six miles distant from the French right. An officer bearing a letter announcing to the Duke of Wellington the march of Bülow's corps, had also been taken. Time was becoming every instant more precious.

At one o'clock, a movement towards the French right gave note of preparation. It was Napoleon galloping towards La Belle Alliance, in order to direct an attack from that quarter against the British left and centre. A sea of plumes waved around the modern Sesostris:

the plain seemed far and near but a living mass of glittering arms, as the multitudes rending the air with loud shouts of *Vive l'Empereur!* advanced to the onset.

Three contiguous columns of infantry, each composed of an entire division, and far too closely formed to admit of their being deployed, composed the French right of this attack, and were directed against General Picton's position. They were supported by three comparatively feeble bodies, two of cavalry and one of infantry; and were followed by thirty pieces of artillery that were brought down the slope, after the troops, which all belonged to the first corps under Count d'Erlon, had advanced into the valley. Marshal Ney led the attack. On the left of these masses were some battalions that proceeded to assault La Haye Sainte; while on the French left of the Charleroi road, a large force, composed of Milhaud's cuirassiers, marched against the British centre. Thus, in one point of the line, infantry alone were sent to attack infantry, cavalry, and artillery combined, and as yet altogether unbroken; while on another part, cavalry were also sent on a similar errand.

The assailing troops advanced with their usual bravery. Perponcher's Belgian division, in front line of the British, fled at the first onset; the 1st battalion of the Rifles were of course forced to give ground before the torrent of advancing foes; they did so fighting right bravely, and fell back on the main body of the division which Picton was leading up to the summit of the hill. The 32d and 92d Regiments were the first that opened their fire upon the enemy, who, already shaken by the round and grape of the artillery, halted to return the fire of the infantry which was rapidly augmented as the Royals, 42d, 44th, and 79th Regiments joined the fray. A short and desperate conflict ensued; and it was here

the iron-headed Picton fell in a manner that well became the leader of the "old fighting division."

Under the close and telling line-fire of the British infantry, the enemy's columns were soon transformed into mere shapeless masses of men, holding their ground firmly indeed, and pouring out a heavy and destructive fire, but destitute of order, and totally unable to meet the tempest about to burst upon their devoted heads. We have seen that Ponsonby's brigade of cavalry, consisting of the Royal Dragoons, the Greys, and the Enniskillens, were posted in the hollow behind Picton's division. The commander of these troops timed his attack with great skill; he no sooner saw the French columns warmly engaged than he led the cavalry up the slope, and passed through the intervals and round the left of the British infantry. Wild and shrill from the Highland ranks rose the sound of the mountain pipe, mingled with shouts of "Scotland for ever!" when the soldiers of the Scottish regiments saw the Greys arriving to their aid. The horsemen, as they advanced, replied to the spirit-stirring cheer; spurs were dashed in chargers' flanks, and like the *avalanche* loosened by sudden and mighty effort from Alpine cliff, the whole of the gallant band burst at once upon the foe.

The effect of the shock was tremendous. The four shapeless columns were instantly broken into fragments, and trodden under hoof. As the tempest swept on, small parties of men who had here and there escaped untouched, others who had only been overthrown, and hundreds who had sunk down before the fury of the onset, ran wildly about the field, scarcely knowing where to seek safety; many rushed in upon the British infantry and surrendered. Two eagles and 2000 men were taken; and the ground everywhere covered with

killed and wounded. The horsemen still continued their bold career; the feeble bodies of cavalry and infantry that had supported the leading columns were overthrown; the thirty guns that had been advanced into the plain were captured, and the artillerymen cut down.

Unfortunately, this splendid result was not enough for the gallant hearts by whom it was achieved. Wild with success, and carried away by their own daring spirits, they hurried in utter confusion up the opposite slope, sabring everything that came in their way. But here it was for the hundredth time made apparent how easily cavalry get disordered and out of hand, and how dangerous it is to indulge in such impetuous pursuits, unless under very peculiar circumstances, or where well-formed supports are at hand. This noble brigade, before the collected onset of which all resisting enemies had fallen, were completely exhausted and broken by their own headlong rashness when they gained the level of the French position; where, if they had been in order, a few hundred of unsupported horsemen could assuredly have effected nothing. It was too late to reflect; time was not even given them to rally. They were instantly attacked by four French regiments of cavalry that had been in reserve,— 7th and 12th cuirassiers, 3d and 4th lancers,—and driven back with great loss to their original position, after having completely disorganized, in this single onset, upwards of 15,000 men, and thirty pieces of artillery.

The simultaneous attack made by the cuirassiers on the British centre was equally unsuccessful, though attended with comparatively little loss. They were warmly saluted with round and grape from the batteries of Alten's division, as they advanced slowly across the plain. But they continued to press forward till they

reached the slope of the position, where they were charged by the household brigade of cavalry under Lord Edward Somerset, and forced after a sharp hand-to-hand combat to leave the field. The French were formed in three lines, and on one point at least, probably on more, the gallant soldiers of the Life Guards galloped fairly over each of the successive lines in their fierce and daring career.

While these conflicts were passing on the right and left of the Charleroi road, a different species of combat was engaged and bravely maintained in the intermediate space, close on the road itself. We have seen that when the 1st corps advanced against the British left, some battalions were sent to attack La Haye Sainte. The French are said to have made the assault with more than usual bravery and resolution. They carried the front garden, which is only surrounded by a fence, at the first onset, but could not force their way into the farm-yard. Colonel Klenke having brought the Lüneburg light infantry to the aid of the 2d battalion of the Legion, the garden was in part cleared of the enemy.

Colonel Baring, however, seeing the entire plain to his right filled with cuirassiers, did not think a slight garden-fence sufficient protection against such a force, and therefore endeavoured to fall back into the court. But here was seen on what trivial circumstances the fate of battles may sometimes depend, and how dangerous it is to attempt any movement with inexperienced troops in the face of an enemy. The young Lüneburg soldiers had advanced and fought right bravely, and would no doubt have continued to do so had they been ordered. To discriminate between retreat and flight was, however, a different thing; and no sooner were their backs to the foe than, carrying officers and old legionary soldiers

along with them in their confusion, they hurried wildly away to the main position. A causeless fear, as so often happens, made them blind to actual danger: the French infantry had turned the house; but these real foes arrested not the fugitives who were flying from the phantoms of their own imagination: they rushed through the infantry with comparatively little loss, and would have escaped pretty well, had not the advancing cuirassiers overtaken the helpless rout, and made terrible havoc among them before they could reach the shelter of the position.

How much may be effected, even in cases of extremity, by a few cool, steady and determined old soldiers, was also strikingly illustrated on this occasion. Three small detachments, that must have been very feeble as they were only commanded by subalterns, Lieutenant Carey, Lieutenant Græme, Ensign Frank, had, from being stationed in the buildings, escaped the panic. Not intimidated by the hosts of foes that encircled them, these brave men maintained their post, baffled all the efforts of the exulting victors, and kept the whole body of assailants at bay till the Life Guards, having repulsed the cuirassiers, fell upon the infantry that surrounded the farm, and nearly exterminated the whole party: when Colonel Baring immediately re-occupied the long and bravely defended post.

Before three o'clock all these attacks had been repulsed; the entire front of the position was clear of enemies, time was flying, the Prussians were advancing, and not the slightest impression had been made on the Allied army. Great gallantry had been displayed by the French troops; but where are the marks of genius displayed by their leader?

Fresh numbers were, however, ready to replace those

who had been defeated. The fire of the artillery continued; the shot ploughing the earth round the Allied masses, and every now and then tearing away entire files of the close and serried ranks. The troops of the first line could not always be kept behind the ridge, and even there they were not protected from the shells exploding in every direction.

Brief space was left to think of shelter. Half-an-hour had scarcely elapsed from the defeat of the attacks already noticed, before the enemy was again in motion. A large force of cavalry descended into the plain; they were formed in four lines, the first composed of cuirassiers, the second of dragoons, the third of lancers, the fourth of hussars. The fire of the British artillery, and the flanking fire of the troops in La Haye Sainte, close to which the right of these new assailants passed, did not arrest their progress for a moment. They came on in good style, and without any of that precipitation to which French writers have ascribed the loss of the battle; it was evidently a prepared attack, and might have been recalled without the least difficulty. On the right of the cavalry two columns of infantry again advanced upon La Haye Sainte. Both attacks were signally defeated.

From the time of the earliest wars carried on between France and England, some strange fatality seems to have attended the attacks of the French against the English. On no occasion, from the days of Cressy and Agincourt down to the battle of which we are speaking, did they ever attempt to close with a compact and regular body of English infantry steadily awaiting the onset. They have closed with our cavalry; because, at the best, the closing of cavalry does not bring the contending adversaries into the close and deadly struggle that a close combat of infantry would. They have often repulsed

our attacks. At Fontenoy they actually defeated us; and in the confused scenes of modern battles, they have frequently gained partial advantages over us. Many causes, of which their skill and gallantry were certainly not the least, have at times rendered them triumphant in the ultimate result of entire campaigns. But the very men who braved the fiercest fire of musketry and artillery, constantly shrunk from all close contact with the British infantry. What musketry and artillery could not effect was never therefore accomplished, and should never perhaps have been attempted. We know the opinions that prevailed when the events here spoken of took place; we know the full force of opinion, and can well understand that even brave men may act with feebleness when fighting under false institutions, or guided by erroneous views. But with a perfect conviction of all this, we must still fancy that their own or their country's fame had cast a magic spell over the British infantry which constantly paralyzed the boldest of avowedly bold adversaries. In no other way can we account for the strange scene we have now to describe.

The cuirassiers ascended the slope in gallant style; the Allied infantry formed squares to receive them; and the artillerymen having fired grape to the last, sought shelter behind the ranks of the infantry, leaving the guns, which could not be removed, as the horses had purposely been sent to the rear, to take care of themselves. The French, not perceiving the great advantage of so simple an arrangement, thought they had captured the artillery, and shouted victory, till the premature cheer actually resounded along the opposite line, and electrified, as we are told, their whole army. It was a short-lived joy. The firm aspect of the squares did not at first arrest the progress of the horsemen, and many squadrons galloped

forward to the charge. But not in a single instance did they preserve their order, and come in a compact body against the ridges of the bayonets; and even the best of these first charges—and the first were made in a more determined manner than those that followed—failed at a considerable distance from the infantry. The squadrons thundered on for a brief space, then opened out and edged away from every volley. Sometimes they even halted and turned before they had been fired at—sometimes after receiving the fire of the standing ranks only.

In this manner they flew from one square to another, receiving the fire of different squares as they passed; they flew more frequently at a trot, however, than at a gallop, from one side of the square to another, receiving the fire from every face of the square. Some halted, shouted, and flourished their sabres; individuals and small parties here and there rode close up to the ranks. It is said, that on some points they actually cut at the bayonets with their swords, and fired their pistols at the officers. But nowhere was there one gallant effort made to break a square by the strength and impulse of the steeds on which these ignorant and incapable horsemen were mounted. Not a single leader, from General to Cornet, set an example of soldierlike daring by dashing boldly into the midst of levelled muskets and presented bayonets: no easy or pleasant task it may be said, but it is to perform such tasks when occasion calls that men are raised to military rank and honour. Fifteen thousand cavalry were defeated in the course of this long day's battle, mostly by the fire of the infantry; yet was there not a single French horseman, soldier, or officer, who perished on a British bayonet,—not one from first to last.

The few that fell by the fire of the squares was also a matter of great astonishment to most of those officers present, who allowed themselves to see with their own eyes* instead of seeing through the medium of fancied theories, or subsequently published poems. Indeed, the ill-directed charges of which we have been speaking, could not have continued so long and been so frequently renewed, had not the destroying power of the infantry been exceedingly small. Yet are attacks so feebly made brought seriously forward as good evidence to show that modern infantry are capable of resisting the onset of bold, skilful and determined horsemen!

It must not be supposed that these contests were quietly witnessed by the British cavalry. On the contrary, many partial and several very gallant charges were made against the assailants, and both parties actually fought between the squares,—English horsemen frequently complaining of having been mistaken for enemies, and fired at by their own countrymen. Whenever the ridge was cleared for a moment, the incomparable artillerymen sprang to their guns, and grape-shot again rattled among the hostile ranks; when the foe recovered the ground, the gunners sought shelter, but only to fly back to their post as soon as the slightest opportunity offered.

Before four o'clock the position was again clear of enemies; and the troops who had been assaulting La Haye Sainte fell back amidst the shouts of the exulting Germans, as soon as the cavalry retired. But the contest still continued in the wood of Hougemont.

* Captain Pringle, R.E, in his excellent account of the Battle of Waterloo, says of one charge:—"And it is not easy to believe how few fell: only one officer and two men, though no doubt many were wounded. Many squares fired at the distance of thirty yards with no better effect."

We are inclined to look upon the brief interval of repose that followed these attacks as the crisis of Napoleon's fate at Waterloo. It was past four o'clock, no impression had been made on the Allied army, and General Dumond, who commanded the light cavalry, detached for the purpose of watching Bülow's motions, sent notice that a corps of 10,000 men was in full march towards Planchenois. This was evidently the advanced-guard of a larger force; and the French were thus about to be placed between two fires. At the moment of which we are speaking, it was yet in Napoleon's power to break off the battle. His cavalry was still powerful, and might have covered the retreat; the Prussians were too distant to act on his flank, and the farms and hamlets along the roadside were so many posts that would have helped to keep the pursuing Allies at bay.

The retreat might not perhaps have succeeded,—it certainly should not; but modern strategy is so fond of building golden bridges for retiring enemies, that a fair chance of success certainly existed. From the first retrograde step, the Belgian campaign was no doubt a complete failure; but ruin was at least delayed, if not averted; and in war, particularly in a war against coalitions, it is impossible to say how much may not be gained when time is gained. If the battle was to be continued, it became necessary at once to overwhelm the British in order to have free hands against the Prussians; and that this was not to be effected by partial attacks, events had sufficiently shown. One well-combined effort with the whole army, leaving the Prussians unattended to for the moment, and the posts of Hougemont and La Haye Sainte to follow the fate of the day, seemed to hold out the only prospect of success. Supposing always that success against the British would have left the French

strong enough to meet the Prussians, an opinion that Napoleon must of course have entertained, or he could not for an instant have continued the contest after their arrival became certain. But no steps evincing military genius or boldness of conception were adopted; half-measures alone were continued.

The 6th corps under Count Lobau, about 7000 strong, which had not been engaged in the previous action, but had calmly witnessed, in accordance with the practice of modern science, the rout and slaughter of the best part of the first corps, was directed to take up a position in front of Planchenois, and by aid of the strong ground intervening between that village and St Lambert, to arrest Bülow's march. The French army were thus left to perform, in a reduced state, the task to which, in a complete state, they had not been found equal. It had also become evident, from the advance of Count d'Erlon's corps on one side, and of the cavalry on the other, that the small post of La Haye Sainte could not possibly arrest the progress of attacks directed against the main body of the British army. But as three entire divisions of infantry were already employed in contending against three or four battalions in and about Hougemont, five battalions were now sent to enter on a similar contest against the three or four hundred men cooped up in the small farm. It was allowing the few to contend by the aid of stone-walls against the many.

For upwards of an hour the Germans maintained themselves right bravely; but their ammunition being exhausted, and being unable to obtain a supply of rifle-cartridges, owing to one of the thousand accidents and mischances that will happen in modern battles, they were reluctantly forced to abandon their post: their retreat was not molested.

The French turned the conquest to immediate advantage. Vast swarms collecting behind and under the protection of the buildings, rushed *en tirailleurs* against the front of the third and fifth divisions. No collected onset was made, but whole clouds of these skirmishers poured a most destructive fire on the constantly diminishing line of the Allies. It was in following up success of this kind, and in the manner here described, that the real strength of the French Imperial and Republican armies consisted during the war. In these *tirailleur* attacks and advances from post to post, the natural gallantry and intelligence of the soldiers, the skill of inferior commanders, as well as the spirit of enterprise which distinguished the whole, were always eminently conspicuous.

On the present occasion, bands of these skirmishers advanced so close to the front of the third division, that the fifth battalion of the King's German Legion was ordered to charge them. The enemy fled at the first onset, but a body of French cuirassiers who were in support having protected the fugitives, attacked the Germans before they could reform their ranks, and made a terrible havoc among them. Attempting, however, to follow up their own success, the horsemen were received with a fire of musketry from the left of the third division, which again sent them reeling down the slope. The 3d Hussars next advanced, in order to avenge the fate of their countrymen. The French soon formed to receive these new adversaries, and both parties stood observing each other for a moment, as if reluctant to engage. At last the hussars charged,—the French, with their strange notions of cavalry tactics, awaiting the onset at a halt, *de pied ferme :* a short *mêlée* at sword's point followed, without being attended with any material result.

One of the many hand-to-hand combats that took place during the day, occurred here in full view of the British line, immediately after the main parties separated. A hussar on one side, and a cuirassier on the other, had been entangled among retiring enemies. On attempting to regain their respective corps they met in the plain. The hussar had lost his cap, and was bleeding from a wound in the head; but did not on that account hesitate to attack his steel-clad adversary: and it was soon proved, if proof were wanting, that the strength of cavalry consists in good horsemanship and in skilful use of the sword, and not in heavy defensive armour. The superiority of the hussar was visible the moment the swords crossed. After a few wheels a tremendous facer made the Frenchman reel in the saddle; all attempts to escape from his more active foe were impossible; and a second blow stretched him on the ground, amid the cheers of the Germans, who in anxious suspense had remained quiet spectators of the combat.

While the destructive but indecisive *tirailleur* action, accompanied by a heavy fire of artillery, continued round Hougemont as well as on both sides of the road in front of La Haye Sainte, Blücher in person had joined Bülow's corps; and though few of his troops had yet come up, he immediately ordered some batteries to open upon the enemy, in order to give the British notice of his arrival.

At an early hour in the morning, the old Marshal, though still suffering greatly from the effects of his fall, caused himself to be lifted on horseback, and immediately put his troops in motion towards Mont St Jean. The first corps proceeded by Fromont and Ohain; the fourth filed through Wavre, and directed its march on St Lambert; the second followed by the same route, but was

long delayed in consequence of a fire that broke out in the town, and forced the regiments to strike into deep and narrow cross-roads, where they were entangled for some time. The third corps under Thielman was already in motion to follow as a rear-guard, when the two divisions of light cavalry, that had been left to watch the French after the battle of Ligny, announced the advance of a large body of the enemy. It was Grouchy's army in full march towards Wavre. Thielman was instantly ordered to retrograde, and defend the passage of the Dyle; he was told to act according to circumstances, but on no account to look for reinforcements till the principal battle should be decided.

The ground was completely saturated with the rain which had fallen without interruption for sixteen hours. The rivulets had become torrents; every hollow was filled with water; some of the forest roads actually resembled water-courses, through which the men had to wade for hundreds of yards together; deep pools of water that constantly forced the troops to break their files, had been formed in every direction. The columns extended at times over miles of ground. If the cavalry and infantry were retarded by such obstacles, the case was far worse with the artillery. The guns frequently sank axle-deep into the loamy soil, and had to be worked out by the tired and exhausted soldiers. "We shall never get on," was repeated from various parts of the column. "But we must get on," was Blücher's reply; "I have given my word to Wellington, and you will surely not make me break it: only exert yourselves a few hours longer, children, and certain victory is ours." Thus encouraging the active, and rebuking the tardy, the old man was seen on every part of the long and toilsome line of march.

The thunder of artillery had been heard for hours in the direction of Mont St Jean, and officers were constantly arriving with accounts of the fierce nature of the combat, and his troops were still engaged in toiling through deep and narrow lanes, certain to be placed in imminent danger should disaster befall the British. At three o'clock, information arrived that Thielman was seriously attacked at Wavre: the intelligence might have shaken the firmest nerves; but nothing changed the purpose of the indomitable Blücher. "Tell him to do his best," was the Marshal's reply: "the campaign of Belgium must be decided at Mont St Jean, and not at Wavre."

It had been expected that the Prussians would have joined before one o'clock, but it was already past four when the two first brigades of Bülow's division, together with his reserve cavalry, cleared the passes of St Lambert, and crossed the swollen rivulet of Lasnes. And so careless had long success rendered the French, that these dangerous assailants passed unchallenged through the wood; were not observed by a single patrol, nor impeded in their march by the slightest opposition. We have seen that with this small force Blücher immediately proceeded to attack the nearest enemy. It was Count Lobau's corps which had been thrown back, *en potence*, in order to protect the right of the French army, and which occupied a very strong position, extending from the heights above Frichemont to the woods of Vinere and Hubermont in front of Planchenois.

The Prussian guns were heard from the British position; and it is strange to say how little effect a sound that should have been so cheering produced on the minds of officers and soldiers. Blücher's movement had never been made known to the army; and though it was be-

lieved or thought that something of the kind would or might take place, so unused were the troops to depend on the aid of allies, that no attention was paid to this decisive attack till it was in full force on the immediate left of the line. And what were the vigorous measures taken by Napoleon to extricate himself from the coil thus closing around him? They are, in truth, not easily discovered.

The pressure of the *tirailleur* swarms continued on both sides of La Haye Sainte and of Hougemont. The cannonade was also kept up with great spirit wherever there was an opening. The British guns were not idle, and Lord Hill sent up two batteries from the right to replace those of the centre that had been rendered unserviceable. Men were falling fast in every direction, and the confusion in the rear was very great; the roads were crowded with broken carriages, wounded men, dismounted dragoons and an innumerable train of followers and attendants, whose very existence had hardly before been suspected. The soldiers of some of the foreign corps attended a wounded comrade in whole bands: one man carried the sufferer's cap, another his musket, a third his knapsack; and the bleeding invalid himself was often supported by as many friends as could possibly assist him: most of these compassionate persons forgot to return to the field. Many are also said to have left the ranks, because it pleased them to think that the day was lost.

The Hanoverian hussars of Cumberland were carried out of the field by Colonel Hake, their commanding officer, not only without orders, but in direct violation of orders: and Perponcher's Belgian division, defeated at the first onset of Count d'Erlon's corps, never appeared again as a collected body: but not a single British bat-

talion was shaken even for a moment. That, as usual, many of the men who escorted wounded officers and comrades to the rear, remained away, may be true; others however returned; and numbers of officers and soldiers who had been wounded, came back to the ranks after having had their wounds dressed. Those who, with the Belgians and other fugitives, hurried to the rear, carrying panic even to the gates of Antwerp, were men of the baggage-guards that had been stationed behind the army, and had never come within miles of the field of battle, but were terrified by the absurd reports which the runaways spread in their flight. Every house and shed near Mont St Jean was filled with the bleeding and the dying.

Confusion was behind the army, and death raged along its front; but the soldiers engaged stood firm amid the fight, as stand the rocks of the north amidst the fiercest chaffing of the ocean's waves: and a wild and extraordinary fight it certainly was. The attacks no longer bore the appearance of being made by disciplined and well-organized troops, but resembled rather the fierce and irregular onsets made by the soldiers of the middle ages, who rushed forward in large or small bands, as accident or the influence of favourite leaders prompted, in order to try their individual courage against whatever adversaries some similar impulse might throw in their way. The battle was not a trial of skill or soldiership, but a trial of who should hold out longest; and in this contest every advantage was on the side of the Allies, whose object it was to gain time, because they knew that the hours of the French were already numbered.

About five o'clock, Milhaud's cuirassiers and the light cavalry of the Guard again returned to the ridge. The cuirassiers of Valmy were sent to support them, and the

reserve of the Guard followed, it is said, without orders. Whether this assertion be true or false can matter little; for nine-tenths of the cavalry that advanced might at any moment have been recalled with perfect facility. The charges on the infantry, who had again formed squares, were made by small unconnected and unsupported parties of from fifty to a hundred men each, as chance or the influence of particular officers seemed to direct. They advanced more frequently at a trot than at a gallop; as a collected body, no twenty men ever came within twenty yards of a square, and no single horseman ever came within sword's length of an infantry soldier. They edged away from one square to another; were fired at from every direction, but never attempted one gallant shock against the bayonets of their opponents. Yet the effect produced by the fire seemed still very trifling. At one place, two or three men went down before a volley of musketry; at another, a horse sunk beneath his rider, or both rolled upon the ground: here a horseman was attempting to force his disabled steed from the field, and there a horse was running masterless, sometimes dragging sometimes carrying the wounded trooper out of the press; horses wild with affright and covered with blood, and whose riders had fallen, were flying about the plain in every direction. In this manner thousands of French cavalry were destroyed during the day; but at no one time or place did the fire of a square produce an effect that should for an instant have arrested a bold and determined onset.

From the cavalry, the British infantry lost not a man in all these attacks; but wherever the squares became exposed to the fire of artillery, the loss was naturally very heavy. On several points, squares became at times exposed to the fire of musketry; and the 27th regiment

was almost entirely destroyed in such a situation, the soldiers closing in nobly to replace their fallen comrades. Fortunately, however, the enemy did not possess the skill of combining cavalry and infantry attacks, else it is impossible to say how destructive the result might have proved.

Against the British cavalry the French horsemen evinced more resolution than against the infantry; and while the scene we have been describing was proceeding, severe but equally unconnected cavalry actions were fought in front and often between the squares; the enemy, from time to time, supporting his parties by reinforcements from larger masses that remained inactive and exposed to the fire of the British artillery as often as the gunners found an opportunity of issuing from the squares in order to work their guns. If we admit that, during this arduous and terrible day, the British infantry acted up to the high standard of soldiership which their long career of victory had established, it must be added that the artillery actually surpassed all expectation, high as, from their previous conduct, that expectation naturally was. In point of zeal and courage, the officers and men of all the three arms were, of course, fully upon a par; but the circumstances of the battle were favourable to the artillery: and certainly the skill, spirit, gallantry and indefatigable exertion which they displayed almost surpass belief.

While the battle was raging in this manner along the front of the position, the French drove the Belgian troops from Papelotte and La Haye; and thus, as their historians express themselves, cut off the Prussians from the British. The 12th dragoons charged and completely routed one of the columns advancing to this attack, but this partial success did not prevent the others

from obtaining possession of the hamlets; an advantage that had not, however, the slightest influence on the progress of the action, and never arrested the advance of the Prussians for a moment. Yet need there was that they should be checked, for they were rapidly collecting strength, and pressing on the French right; the shot from their guns already crossed the Charleroi road, and occasioned great confusion in rear of the hostile army.

The end of the sanguinary drama was now approaching. The result was not doubtful, and never had been so; and though the number of victims destined to fall before a valiant host could be driven from the field was still uncertain, it was perfectly evident that the catastrophe would correspond to the long, fierce, and terrible nature of the combat itself. The French cavalry had again been driven from the position. The battle was once more reduced to the skirmishing in front of La Haye Sainte and round Hougemont; and to a cannonade which, owing to the many guns dismounted on both sides, was already much diminished. During this comparative lull, Clinton's division moved to its left, and closed in on the division of Guards; Mitchell's brigade followed the movement. The Brunswick troops were sent to support the third division. General Chassé's Dutch division also closed to their left, and some of his regiments came into front line. And high time it was to concentrate all the forces towards the centre: every nerve was now to be strained for the defence of a point on which the last and fiercest storm of battle was about to burst.

The Prussians were pressing in strength on the right of the French. Bülow had forced Count Lobau's corps to fall back, and was attacking the village of Planchenois situ-

ated close behind their line. The post was of vital importance, and Napoleon found himself obliged to send a division of the Young Guard to aid in its defence. Shouting their gallant war-cry, the devoted band advanced to meet the contest; and for a moment their impetuosity checked the pressure, if it could not arrest the progress of attack. Swarms of assailants were gathering around, and extending to the very edge of the Charleroi road. Onset followed onset in rapid succession; no sooner had one assault been repulsed than another was made; and no sooner had one party obtained possession of the village than it was instantly attacked by the other. It was only the termination of the battle that left the Prussians undisturbed masters of the corse-encumbered ground. The sanguinary combat was still undecided on this point, when General Ziethen reached La Haye, and driving before him the farthest troops of the French right, occupied the space between Bülow's corps and the left of the British. The situation of Napoleon's host was now desperate: a circle of fire was extending round their right flank; the British still stood unbroken in their front, and day was drawing to a close. Ruin seemed inevitable; and as every effort of valour had failed, the madness of despair was now to be tried.

The entire of the Old Guard, amounting by all French accounts to 8000 effective men, had remained in reserve during the whole day. These veterans, who had for years been their country's pride and almost the terror of Continental Europe, could truly say that they had never fled from a field of battle. Amidst the disasters of the French army, their fame had remained untarnished; and they were now to be tried against men who, like themselves, acknowledged no victors. They were called upon to support the sinking cause of a long

cherished leader. The blot which a hundred battles gained by the British, had inflicted on the military escutcheon of France was to be effaced; the blood of the thousands who had fallen by British arms was to be avenged; the unconquered were to meet the unconquered, and the world was to learn from the result who were its first and foremost soldiers.

Towards seven o'clock, the movements along the French position indicated that the last decisive attack, which the situation of the battle now rendered inevitable, was about to be directed against the British centre. As General Ziethen's troops were already in full communication with the British, the two brigades of cavalry under Vivian and Vandeleur, which had very judiciously been stationed on the extreme left of the army, became disposable, and were drawn towards the threatened point. The first of these brigades, consisting of three fine unbroken regiments, advanced along the top of the ridge; the second, which had been partially engaged during the day, followed in the hollow to the right, where the rest of the cavalry were assembled. Pack's brigade, or its gallant remains rather, was also drawn in to the centre, and brought from the extreme left of the fifth division to the edge of the Charleroi road. The whole of the British infantry were even ordered to form four deep,—a sacrifice of half their strength, which has been defended on the ground, that the exhausted state of the men rendered concentration necessary.

On the adverse side Napoleon himself was forming the Old Guard into columns of attack. According to French accounts, each column was composed of three battalions —one battalion in line, supported on each flank by a battalion in close column. Two of these columns led on

nearly equal front,—a third was in the rear ; guns also were placed between the masses, as if purposely intended to embarrass the movements of these strange and unwieldy bodies. Count Reille was ordered to form the remains of his corps into columns, and to advance to the left of the Guard. On the right, Count d'Erlon was to support the attack by similar masses that were to issue from behind La Haye Sainte. Six compact bodies, extending their front of attack from the right of the British Guards almost to the left of the fifth division, were now seen advancing against the concentrated line of the Allies. As the previous cavalry attacks had been unaided by infantry, so was this attack unaided by cavalry. What seemed the remnant of cavalry force was posted with some artillery between three or four squares of infantry that remained in reserve along the brow of the French position. It is totally impossible to discover any ground for the praise bestowed on these arrangements ; and so completely was the flank of the Guard destitute of support and protection, that it was turned by the entire of Sir Hussey Vivian's brigade of cavalry, and left perfectly open to the attack of Adam's brigade of infantry.

The renewed roar of artillery announced the approach of the storm. Loud and long were the shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur !*" that greeted Napoleon, as he led the Guard to the brow of the hill near La Belle Alliance. "*Voila le chemin de Bruxelles,*" he said, in reply to these cheers, as he pointed to the British position. It was the "*Valete*" of Claudius in reply to the "*Morituri te salutant*" of the doomed gladiators. But no evil bodings checked the ardour of soldiers who thought themselves advancing to certain victory ; for Napoleon had caused his aid-de-camp, Labedoyere, to inform them that the

fire of Ziethen's guns proceeded from the artillery of Grouchy, who had fallen upon the rear of the Prussians —a little expedient well worthy of a little mind.

The first columns that advanced pushed through the swarms of *tirailleurs* who were pressing on in front of La Haye Sainte. They beat back the foreign troops on the left of the third division, and engaged the gallant remains of Halkett's brigade, that during the entire day had maintained the most trying point of the whole position. A close and continued roll of musketry here commenced, and extended rapidly to the left, as Count d'Erlon's corps engaged the fifth division ; at the same time the French Guards prolonged the attack on the right. These veterans, advancing under a murderous fire of round and grape, came full upon the front of the British Guards. A shower of musket-balls mowed down the leading ranks, and the Imperial Grenadiers halted to return the galling fire. Their first shot tolled their own doom : for a column halted to engage in a fire of musketry, may be pretty safely considered as a column defeated.

The 52d and 71st Regiments, together with some companies of the 95th Rifles who had suffered comparatively little during the day, were in a hollow on the right of the Guards, just where the position took a bend to the front ; so that they had only to bring their right shoulders forward, in order to come directly on the flank of the French column that was engaged with General Maitland's brigade of English Guards. General Adam, a brilliant officer, executed the movement in a manner that well became his high character and that of his troops ; and the Old Guard suddenly found themselves placed between two fires.

A brief, close, and desperate conflict ensued. As-

sailed in front and flank, the enemy's masses were rent asunder. Mere men of earthly mould could not withstand the deadly hail of shot here poured upon these gallant grenadiers: they wavered and fell back. Loud from the light-division soldiers rose the old Peninsula shout of victory, as, following up their success, they rushed upon the yielding enemy, who gave way in utter confusion. The well-known cheer, coming from those who were wont to lead, sounded proudly along the British line; and the Duke of Wellington now perceiving that the hour of victory had arrived, gave orders for the whole army to advance. All sprung forward with renewed vigour; the Duke himself, hat in hand, cheering on the soldiers in front of the line. When urged by some officers not to expose himself to the heavy fire still poured in upon the advancing troops, he only replied, "Let them fire away now, the battle is gained:" an answer springing from a heart that well deserved to gain such a field. The French, charged in flank by the Prussians, in front by the British, were quickly thrown into one huge, shapeless, and inextricable mass, and driven in total disorder from every part of the long-disputed field.

At the moment when the light brigade was advancing against the leading columns of the Old Guard, Sir Hussey Vivian, leaving these troops to his left, was descending into the plain with his three unbroken regiments of cavalry. As soon as he got beyond the smoke that completely obscured the front of the position, he was assailed by parties of the enemy's horse. Having defeated these, he formed up the 10th and 18th Hussars, and with great judgment instantly proceeded to attack the cuirassiers posted between the supporting squares of the French Guard: it was taking the sting out of the

enemy's force,—giving the Allied infantry free scope to act,—and leaving that of the enemy to be afterwards dealt with at pleasure. The charge of the hussars was as boldly made as judiciously conceived. The cuirassiers were completely routed, and the infantry allowed to profit by their success in perfect security.

Splendid, melancholy, yet almost sublime, was the scene that presented itself to the British army, as they emerged from the smoke which had so long rendered every object but the flashes of hostile fires perfectly invisible. The sun's last rays fell upon a vast and never-equalled mass of fugitives, infantry, cavalry, artillery, all joined together, and trampling in their flight the appalling harvest which the iron hand of death had gathered in during the fray. On the right, the British horsemen were seen driving the rout along; and on the left, as far as the eye could reach, hill and plain were covered with Prussian troops, thousands of whom had only arrived in time to witness the overthrow of an army, which buried in its ruin the mighty empire its own bravery had formerly raised.

Upwards of 50,000 men had fallen in the strife: 20,000 on the part of the Allies, 30,000 on the side of the French. The latter saved from the wreck of Waterloo nothing but the honour due to personal bravery, and the credit of having manfully maintained the cause which they had embraced. Every thing else was lost: the moral as well as the physical force of the army was destroyed. Every particle of *materiel* brought into the field was captured; and their troops were altogether more completely routed than any troops ever had been with modern arms.

And now came a flight and pursuit almost unequalled in military annals, and fully corresponding to the mighty

results of the battle. The Prussians, after a sanguinary combat, had defeated the Young Guard, carried Planchenois, and thrown the whole of the French right upon the Charleroi road, at the very moment when the British cavalry, pressing up by La Belle Alliance, drove the centre and left in upon the same line. Here the troops under the Marquis of Anglesea came upon two squares of the Old Guard, who with some pieces of artillery flanked the road; and it was by the shot of one of these guns, the last fired in the battle, that his Lordship was severely wounded, after having displayed the most brilliant and heroic valour during the whole of the sanguinary day. But the misfortunes of their leader checked not the ardour of the troops, who pressed forward to the *Maison-du-Roi*, where the British were halted, and the further pursuit resigned to the Prussian corps which had taken the least share in the action. The Duke of Wellington and Marshal Blücher had accidentally met near La Belle Alliance; and it was arranged between them, that as the British were exhausted by the fierce and continued combat, the Prussians should undertake the pursuit. And nobly indeed was the task executed.

Darkness closed upon the fugitives, but brought neither rest nor shelter; no time was left them to collect or form: a few shots, at last the mere rolling of the Prussian drums, sufficed to disperse all attempted gatherings. A few rounds fired by the horse artillery cleared the strong position of Genappe, where the Emperor's carriage and the whole baggage of the army were taken. But still the chase continued through the night: the pursuers, who had been under arms since daybreak, now falling almost as rapidly as the pursued, beneath the effects of fatigue and exertion. When the last Prussian

drummer sank down exhausted, he was placed upon a horse taken from Napoleon's carriage, and thus mounted continued to send terror before him. As the wild chase reached Quatre-Bras, only small parties of cavalry and infantry remained with Count Gneisenau; but they still persevered, and the first dawn of morning saw them enter Frasne, whence swarms of fugitives were again seen to fly at their approach. Here fatigue obliged the pursuers to rest; and when they resumed their march, the French army had entirely disappeared; it was only beyond the Sambre that a few bands of stragglers were occasionally observed; and it is now an ascertained fact, that of the 75,000 men who fought at Waterloo, no 15,000 ever again assembled round their colours.

In this hour of trial, when we should expect to find a sovereign and commander braving every danger, using every mortal effort to avert impending ruin, we look in vain for Napoleon: after the advance of the Guard, we lose all sight of him till he is again seen in comparative safety beyond the Sambre. The long and sanguinary nature of the combat, and the arrival of the Prussians, made it perfectly clear that the result of the battle would be of a most decisive character; and that the French, if defeated, must suffer a severe overthrow, of which Blücher would not fail to take every advantage. And yet is the commander of the army thus threatened completely helpless; there is not the slightest symptom to show that any measure of precaution was ever adopted to protect the defeated, or check the pursuers; though Genappe offered an admirable position for the purpose. The Nivelle road was close in rear of the French left, at a distance from the Prussians, and held out a comparatively safe line of retreat; but not a single corps

was ordered to avail itself of the great advantage this line presented: the whole swarm of fugitives pressed on towards Charleroi. Nor do we discover any personal exertion on the part of Napoleon to arrest the progress of disorder: nothing whatever is done; the gallant army that fought so bravely in the cause of this ignoble man, had no alternative but victory, which for hours had been unattainable, or the total ruin by which it was overwhelmed.

This unchecked rout seems fully indeed to confirm the statement contained in the well-known manuscript, entitled, "Remarks on General Gourgaud's Account of the Campaign of 1815." General Kellerman, the author of this very able production, and an actor in the great scene, declares distinctly, "that Napoleon had so completely lost his senses at the end of the battle, as neither to know the persons by whom he was surrounded, nor to understand what was said to him, and that he had to be led out of the fray in a state of total helplessness." The reader will not fail to recollect how perfectly this sinking of all firmness and power of action in the hour of pressing danger, corresponds with other instances of similar feebleness already related in this Memoir. The remarkable manuscript from which we have quoted is mentioned both by Grolman in his Account of the Campaign of 1815, and by Capefigue in describing the events of the year 1813, though neither give the name of the author, not then perhaps known.

Between four and five o'clock in the morning, we find the Emperor at Charleroi, endeavouring to rally fugitives who had already reached that point, though twenty miles from the field of battle. Failing in his efforts to collect these men, he proceeded to Philipville, where fugitives again appeared, but as little inclined for resist-

ance as before. He therefore proceeds to Laon, and on the following day is again haunted by the shadows of his vanquished host. Informed that a body of troops was seen advancing towards the town, he sent an aid-de-camp to ascertain what the appearance could mean, and learned that it was his brother Jerome, with General Soult, Morand, Colbert, Pelet de Morvans, and about 3000 men, cavalry and infantry, who had gathered round them. Were it not attested beyond a doubt the fact would seem almost incredible: for this was on the 20th, and Laon is nearly a hundred miles from the field of battle—a space which these fugitives must have traversed in less than forty-eight hours. Like the sufferings of the retreat from Moscow, the speed of the flight from Waterloo stands altogether without parallel in history.

At Laon, Napoleon, always so haughty and scornful of advice when in prosperity, assembled the officers of his staff, and consulted them on the steps next to be taken. His opinion, he said, inclined him to remain at Laon and rally the army. The majority of the officers thought otherwise; they saw that no efficient force could be assembled; that nothing could be done without the support of the nation and the Chambers; and to obtain this it was necessary for the Emperor to proceed at once to Paris. He consented reluctantly we are told. "You will have it so," he said; "but I feel that you are making me do a foolish thing." But why he who still held absolute sway with the troops, and who has been so often described as a man of firm, of iron character, was guilty of what he called "a foolish thing" at the bidding of a few staff-officers, we are not informed. His journey having been determined upon, he dictated the official bulletin of the battle of Waterloo, and soon

afterwards took his departure for the capital, preceded, as on his return from Moscow and Leipzig, by the tidings, that a gallant army had been sacrificed by folly at the shrine of worthless and unprincipled ambition.

Observations.—The battle of Waterloo must always be considered as a battle fought by the right wing of an army, for the purpose of maintaining a position till the arrival of its left wing should render victory certain. Until the arrival of the Prussians, the battle was therefore purely defensive; it was a mere holding fast of ground that, if successful, could not fail to produce the most splendid results the moment the flank movement should take effect. It was a just and able strategical calculation. The defensive part which the British had to act, did not altogether preclude offensive operations, as far as charges of cavalry and infantry may be so termed; but it precluded all attempts to follow up partial success.

It has often been asked, what the result would have been if the Prussians had not arrived? Questions of this nature may serve to amuse professional ingenuity, but the case itself was beyond the reach of contingencies. As we have before seen, the battle of Waterloo was fought because it was certain that the Prussians would arrive. The subterraneous fires of the earth might, no doubt, have rent part of the globe's surface asunder, and made a chasm between Wavre and Mont St Jean that would have arrested even Blücher himself; but Generals and Commanders of armies must not take such extreme possibilities into account; and no cause or combination of causes, on which military operations can be founded, could have prevented the arrival of the Prussian army.

"But Marshal Grouchy should have interposed or

held them fast," say the defenders of Napoleon ; and the assertion is worthy of such veracious and enlightened advocates.

We have seen that at half-past eleven o'clock on the 17th, Napoleon himself ordered Grouchy to go in pursuit of the Prussians, who, as the Marshal justly observed in reply, would have sixteen hours' start of him, and were already completely lost sight of : a remark that was not well received by the Emperor. As the French troops had not expected to march on that day, it was past one o'clock before they were in motion, and Gerard's corps was not clear of the ground before two o'clock in the afternoon. All their hopes and wishes having made the Prussians retire on Namur, they first followed in that direction. By the time they found their mistake, the rain, which continued to fall in torrents from about two o'clock on the 17th till eight o'clock in the morning of the 18th, had commenced ; so that it was dark before they reached Gembloux, where they naturally halted for the night, in order that the columns might close up. From here Marshal Grouchy writes to the Emperor, and receives an answer dated from the farm of Caillou at ten o'clock on the morning of the 18th.*

"The Emperor desires me to tell you," says the Major-General, "that he is at this moment about to attack the English army which has taken post at Waterloo, near the forest of Soignis. His Majesty, therefore, desires that you will direct your movements on Wavre, so as to come into communication with us, and connect your operations with ours."

In this letter there is not a single word about marching towards Mont St Jean. On the contrary, Grouchy is posi-

* Fragments Historiques sur la Campagne de 1815, et relatif à la Bataille de Waterloo.

tively ordered to proceed to Wavre, which is in a very different direction. At one o'clock, however, when it was found that the British were not to be so easily dealt with as had perhaps been expected, and that the Prussians might also reappear on the scene, Napoleon sends different orders :—

"*From the Field of Battle of Waterloo,*
18*th, at one o'clock in the afternoon.*

"Monsieur Le Mareschal,—At two o'clock this morning you wrote to his Majesty, saying that you intended to march on Sart-à-Valhain. It must, therefore, have been your object to move on Corbaix or Wavre; this movement is in conformity with the dispositions of his Majesty which have been communicated to you. His Majesty, nevertheless, desires me to tell you, that you must manœuvre in our direction. It is for you to see the point where we are, and to take measures accordingly to connect our communications; and be ready to fall upon and crush any party of the enemy that may attempt to assail our right flank. At this moment the action is engaged on the line of Waterloo; the enemy's centre is at Mont St Jean; manœuvre, therefore, so as to join our right.

"*The Major-General, Duke of Dalmatia.*

"*P.S.*—A letter which has this moment been intercepted, informs us that General Bülow is to attack our right. We think we perceive this corps on the heights of St Lambert. Do not, therefore, lose a moment in marching towards us and falling upon Bülow, whom you will take *in flagrante delicto.*"

Now here the order in the P.S. is positive: let us

see, therefore, how far it admitted of being obeyed had it been sent and received early in the day: as it was, it only reached the Marshal at seven o'clock in the evening, when engaged with the Prussians at Wavre, and when all support from him was entirely out of the question. Grouchy had marched with his two corps from Gembloux early in the morning. Owing to the bad state of the roads, it was past eleven o'clock when the Marshal reached Sart-à-Valhain with the head of the column, the main body of his troops being still in the rear. While halting at this place, a heavy fire of artillery was heard in the direction of Mont St Jean; and General Gerard proposed to march in that direction instead of continuing the movement on Wavre, which was "in conformity with the dispositions of his Majesty."

Grouchy has, of course, been attacked on all hands for not following this advice: This, say the men of science, "was the intention, if not the order of Napoleon; and had it been followed, the destruction of the British and Prussian armies was inevitable." A very few words will, we suspect, lead to a different conclusion. We have seen in the first part of this article, that an army of 40,000 men requires at least eight hours to perform, in fair order and on average roads, a march of fifteen miles. When Grouchy arrived at Sart-à-Valhain, he had already performed a march of six miles through very bad roads. From Sart-à-Valhain to Mont St Jean is upwards of sixteen miles, the roads being similar to those which retarded Blücher's march. At what time, then, would Grouchy have reached the field of battle had he advanced in that direction, either from Gembloux in the first instance, or from Sart-à-Valhain when General Gerard gave the advice mentioned? Marching over ordinary roads, he might, if we make a moderate allowance only for the augmenting fatigues of the soldiers, have

arrived about ten o'clock at night, that is, long after the battle was decided. Marching over the extraordinary bad roads he must have traversed, and with his whole army in one column, he could not have reached the field before next morning. Blücher, who assuredly never lost time, required the best part of a day to bring his army from Wavre to the field of action, though he had only to perform a march of ten miles. On what principle, then, are we to suppose that Marshal Grouchy, having the same if not worse roads to traverse, could perform double the distance in less than double the time which would have brought him to the field on the following morning? This is saying nothing of Thielman's corps, probably more than 20,000 strong, that was left on purpose to oppose the march of the French, and which did oppose them, when, late in the evening, Grouchy having received Napoleon's letter already quoted, began to move in the direction of Mont St Jean. The Prussians then instantly attacked the heads of his columns, and would, no doubt, have flanked and impeded the march had it been attempted at an earlier hour; and even to have defeated them would have required time. There was, besides, the second Prussian corps which took no share in the action, and was perfectly ready to turn and confront any force that, having mastered Thielman, should have attempted to molest the rear of the Prussian army.

Nor was Blücher to be surprised, for his measures were skilfully taken. Strong parties of cavalry patroled the country between the Dyle and the Lasne rivulet, and at ten o'clock in the morning Major Folkenhausen already sent accurate information of the position of the Emperor's army on one side, and of the march of Grouchy's corps on the other. This intelligence, as well

as what followed during the day, was partly obtained by personal observation, partly from numerous prisoners captured in different skirmishes fought by these vigilant detachments; and it is impossible to read the Major's report, which is now before us, without being struck by the zeal, spirit and ability which marked his conduct while employed on this important service.

The Prussians opened the campaign with 110,000 effective men; they lost 12,000 at Ligny; and if we add to this 20,000 for stragglers, and all the other casualties that result from a defeat,—and we are purposely making an exaggerated allowance,—it still leaves them 80,000 men on the morning of the 18th of June, a force it was utterly impossible for Grouchy to arrest; and it is pure and simple extravagance to suppose, that any movement which it was in the power of this ill-used officer to execute, could have changed the fate of the battle fought on the plains of Waterloo.

French writers say that Marshal Grouchy would have acted in a very different manner if he had not entirely forgotten the events of Ulm and Austerlitz. The gentlemen who make these assertions, overlook the trifling circumstance that Marshal Mack and Marshal "Forward" were very different persons. What would have been the fate of Napoleon himself if, in 1801, the Austrian cavalry at Marengo had been commanded as the first, second, and sixth brigades of British cavalry were commanded at Waterloo?

How much may depend in war on the character of commanders, independently altogether of their talents, may be easily understood, and was singularly illustrated on this occasion.

The co-operation of the British and Prussian armies had been arranged; some of the Prussian corps were

already on the march, and early in the morning Blücher thus writes to General Müffling, attached to the British head-quarters :—" Your Excellency will assure the Duke of Wellington from me, that ill as I am, I shall place myself at the head of my troops, and attack the right of the French, in case they undertake anything against his Grace. If, on the other hand, the day should pass over without their making any attack, it is then my opinion that we should jointly attack them to-morrow.

" I beg your Excellency to convey to the Duke my full and firm conviction, that this is the best measure to be adopted in our present situation.

(Signed) " BLÜCHER."

This letter, dictated by the gallant spirit of the Marshal himself, was simply given to his aid-de-camp, Count Nostitz, to be forwarded. The latter showed it to General Gneisenau, who, though acquainted with the proposed movement, became alarmed by the decided tone in which it was announced, and which sufficiently indicated the decided manner in which it was to be executed. The Chief of the Staff fearing that the Prussian army might be placed in great danger should the English retire before they could arrive, requested Count Nostiz to enclose the Field-Marshal's letter to Müffling in a note, of which the following is the substance :—

" General Count Gneisenau concurs with the views expressed in the enclosed letter ; but entreats your Excellency to ascertain most particularly, whether the Duke of Wellington *has really adopted the decided resolution of fighting in his present position ;* or whether he only intends some demonstration, which might become very dangerous to our army.

" Your Excellency will be so good as to acquaint us

with the result of your observations on this point, as it is of the greatest consequence that we should be informed of the Duke's real intention."

Had a man of jealous and suspicious disposition commanded the Prussian army, the battle of Waterloo would never have been fought.

Of the French attacks on the British position we have spoken. Of the preparations made to meet these onsets little need be said, as they were from the nature of the combat of a purely defensive character. The conduct as well as the employment of the cavalry has been arraigned, and admits perhaps of being questioned; but the inquiry does not belong to our subject. As horsemen and swordsmen the British every where proved themselves greatly superior to the French, though they fought under the erroneous impression that against lancers and cuirassiers they were contending to disadvantage. That they might on many occasions have swept the ground of the French *tirailleurs*, who inflicted so severe a loss on the infantry, seems also allowed. The charges made by the household brigade, the heavy brigade under Ponsonby, and by the light brigade under Sir Hussey Vivian, produced results of the greatest magnitude. But several brigades were reduced to mere skeletons without having achieved any very perceptible object. It must be admitted, however, that they were very weak when compared to the enemy; for if we say that there were 8000 British cavalry in the field, we rate the number at the highest. Except two squadrons of Brunswick hussars, and a brigade of Dutch carabineers, there were no other Allied cavalry present. This would at the most make 10,000 men; and of these, the brigades of Vandeleur and Vivian were away on the left, and took no active share in the action till the last; whereas the French had, by

their own accounts, 16,000 cavalry engaged. Yet notwithstanding these great odds, the British cavalry were masters of the field at the close of the battle.

Speaking after the event, we may safely assert, that Napoleon could not have driven the British from the ground even if the Prussians had not arrived. Three brigades of British infantry, and one of the King's German Legion, had, except in the loss sustained by the 27th regiment, suffered comparatively little; many of the foreign corps of the second line had not been engaged; and after the arrival of Vivian and Vandeleur, the British cavalry were, as stated, masters of the field. Certain it is, that no effort of the French army could have driven the British from the wood had they taken up a second position along the verges of the forest. And we believe that we repeat the conviction expressed both by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Hill, when we say, that the result of the battle was never doubtful for a single moment.

If we find no systematic plan followed by the French in their attack upon the British line, nothing in fact but a succession of fierce parallel onsets directed against the front, we are bound to condemn the last attempt made with the Guard, as an act bordering on insanity. At the time when these troops were hurled madly into the yawning gulf of destruction, the whole of the Prussian army were already in presence: it was no longer a detachment of 10,000 men, or the single corps of Bülow that threatened the flank, but a swarming and vengeance-breathing host, led by Blücher in person, sure to strike home with the full force of his arm. Count Lobau's corps was thrown back to the very line of retreat; dark masses were crowding into the field, and pressing round the right flank of the French on one side,

and joining the left of the British on the other; all hopes of aid from Grouchy were necessarily at an end, and day was drawing to a close.

To dream of victory under such circumstances was absolute folly; for if Napoleon had overthrown the British, he was no longer in a condition to face the Prussians. No one unacquainted with war can form an idea of the state of weakness and disorganisation to which even a victorious army is reduced by a severe day's action. The number of men absent from the ranks is incredible, and long-continued excitement has completely exhausted bodily strength and mental elasticity. Nor should this surprise us when we recollect that soldiers are, after all, made of mere earthly mould. And can a new adversary falling with a whole army upon such a soulless mass, fail of almost certain victory?

Placed as Napoleon then was, it became his evident duty to employ his last resources in clearing the road, and protecting the retreat as far as was still practicable. The battle was evidently lost, a complete defeat could not perhaps be avoided; but situated as he was, standing almost in opposition to France and the Chambers, there was a prodigious difference between returning as an escaped and disgraced fugitive, burdened with the reproach of having abandoned the army he had ruined, and returning from a well-fought though disastrous field, at the head of an unbroken and unvanquished band, however small and reduced in numbers.

It may safely be said that few battles will be gained by commanders ready to yield on the first frowns of fortune or sinking of the scales; and many splendid victories have been achieved by hardy and resolute perseverance even to the last. But the power of exertion has limits; and no commander can be justified in striv-

ing, as Napoleon did, to effect impossibilities. He appears here, not like a great man grappling with his last breath against adversity, but like an ignoble gambler infuriated by losses, and dashing to earth the dice on which he had staked his fortunes!

Of the conduct displayed by the British infantry in the battle, it is almost impossible to speak in terms of sufficient praise. Young battalions, composed of soldiers who had never seen a shot fired, were reduced to the strength of companies, without ever yielding a single step. On many points the men were forced to close in over the mangled bodies of their comrades, and to fight on ground wet with the blood of the slain: officers, hurt to death, refused to leave the field; and mere boys were seen returning with shouts to the ranks, after having carried wounded officers or comrades to the rear. The small number of troops who actually supported the brunt of this terrible day is almost incredible. Yet terrible as the battle certainly was, and trying as it was from its duration, there was at no time or place any fighting that, in point of severity, equalled the fighting of some of the sterner combats of the Peninsular war. There was nothing equal to Albuera, or to the storming of the Spanish fortresses, and to other actions that might be named.

The measure adopted towards the end of the day, of forming the infantry four deep, has already been noticed. It was diminishing their force by one-half, as the two front ranks only can use their arms. For reserves and supports, the number thus taken away was far too great; and they were, besides, placed in the very worst situation for this purpose: liable to suffer without being able to act, sure to be entangled in any confusion that might happen in the front ranks, and unable to aid except

by filling up the casualties in their own immediate front. This formation, unless ascribed to the exhausted state of the troops, was paying a sort of tribute to the ill-deserved fame of French columns; for no shock or contact takes place, or can take place, with modern infantry arms.

The negligent manner in which so many orders are said to have been delivered during this three days' war, is a subject deserving of great attention; and shows how necessary it is to have a number of active, able and intelligent staff-officers always at hand.

Even during this short and decisive campaign, Fortune more than once proved willing to smile upon her "spoilt and favoured child." But Napoleon knew not how to avail himself of her favours; and Fortune, like the rest of her sex, is never scorned with impunity. The order directing Bülow to proceed to Ligny miscarried; then the British were late at Quatre-Bras. During the battle of the 16th, Count d'Erlon's corps arrived by mere chance, as we have seen, on the most important point, and was marching directly down upon the rear of the Prussian army. As no advantage was taken of this wonderful piece of good fortune, the goddess frowned, and the corps vanished. The heavy rain that fell from the evening of the 17th till the morning of the 18th, delayed for many hours the arrival of Blücher's troops. This chance was also lost to the French; for Napoleon remained inactive during the entire morning. French writers very gravely tell us indeed that this delay was necessary, because the arms of the soldiers were wet. Were those of the British in better condition? We wonder none of Napoleon's historians have thought of burnishing up the old French tale of Cressy, which would have us believe that the rain had injured the bow-strings of the

French, and left those of the English in good order. The two battles have many points of resemblance between them; only that the unerring shafts, and well-wielded bills of our skilful ancestors, told more quickly and effectually than the ill-aimed muskets, and useless bayonets of the unskilful moderns. Why the sons should, in this respect, have degenerated so far from the sires, is a question, to which posterity will find no answer in the writings of modern tacticians.

Except in the errors of the enemy, it cannot be said that the Allies derived any very direct aid from fortune; unless, indeed, we count as great good fortune that in an army where promotion is granted as in the British army, the Duke of Wellington should have been in command, and such men as Vivian, Ponsonby, Halkett, Colborne, Clinton, M'Donald, Ramsay, R.A., and others, placed on the very points where such men happened to be wanted.

If we take a general view of the operations of this brief campaign, we shall find that Napoleon, instead of having surprised the Allies as usually asserted, was rather surprised by them, by the unexpected rapidity with which their troops were assembled on the 16th, as well as by the unexpected junction of the British and Prussians on the 18th.

It is evident from his correspondence, and from the character of his movements, that he did not expect to find the whole Prussian army assembled at Ligny. When he reconnoitred the position, few troops were displayed, Blücher having purposely kept the masses concealed; and Napoleon disappointed turned to his suite, saying, "the old fox won't break cover," *le vieux renard ne débusque pas.* His letter to Marshal Ney, dated before Fleurus at two o'clock, speaks only of "a *corps* of the

enemy which has taken post between Bry and Sombreff, and which the Marshal is to turn by the Namur road, if not overthrown before he can arrive." It is only at a quarter past three, when finding himself opposed by a large force, that he speaks of the Prussian *army*, and urges Marshal Ney to make the often disputed flank-movement. Had any movement of this nature entered into his views from the first, had there been any of those "sublime conceptions" of which his worshippers are so fond of speaking, he would have commanded it at an early part of the day, and would have ordered Count d'Erlon's corps to march at once by the short and direct Marbais, or old Roman road,—the road they afterwards followed by accident,—instead of sending them round by the circuitous route of the Namur road. This pressing application to Marshal Ney for aid during the heat of the battle, also proves that he did not expect the British to be in force at Quatre-Bras.

His directions to Marshal Grouchy on the 17th, and his letters written on the 18th, show that he was as little prepared for the junction of the Allied armies at Waterloo, as for their early assembly on the 16th.

Instead of immediately sending troops on the traces of the retiring Prussians, he drags the Marshal, who is to conduct the pursuit, for four or five hours about with him over the field of the previous day's battle, and then desires him to look, where best he may, for an army which had already taken up a new position behind the Dyle. Grouchy, thinking like Napoleon—for neither dreamt of a junction with the British—that the Prussians had retired to Namur or Liege, strikes to his right instead of his left, and only learns the real direction of their retreat during the forenoon of the 18th. He then follows to Wavre; and at three o'clock, before his troops

have closed up, commences the action against Thielman's corps.

While engaged in this sharp and unsuccessful combat, during which both Vandamme and Gerard are wounded, he receives the order sent at one o'clock from Waterloo, desiring him to join the right of the French army, and take Bülow in "*flagrante delicto.*" That is, Grouchy is to break off a battle already engaged against fierce and enterprising adversaries, reform his army in column of march, force the passage of the Dyle where best he can, beat Thielman's corps, and then with what may remain of his 32,000 men, overtake and arrest the whole of Blücher's army, double his own strength, and which had at least eight hours the start of him! Grouchy endeavoured to obey, and had *at ten o'clock at night* effected the passage of the Dyle at Limalle, an hour after Blücher's army had decided the fate of the battle on the plains of Waterloo, at least ten miles distant!

If, on the 17th or early on the 18th, Napoleon had expected to require aid from Grouchy, he would necessarily have ordered him to follow the course of the Dyle, interpose between the right of the main French army, and any corps of Prussians that might rally and endeavour to join the English. Instead of this, he desires him to follow the Prussians, attack them where he may find them; sends him, as he believes, to the eastward, and only calls for his aid in the west, on the battle-field of Waterloo, when he finds himself assailed by numerous forces, which he had thought in full retreat towards Liege. In his first letter, written at two o'clock in the morning, he speaks only of a single Prussian column having taken the road to Wavre, and this column Marshal Grouchy is to press and attack; the "other two columns," evidently

supposed to be the main body of the Prussian army, are only to be followed by light troops. Even in the second letter written at one o'clock, when the march of Grouchy is so urgently pressed, Napoleon speaks only of Bülow's corps: that a whole army was marching against him had evidently not been dreamt of in his "splendid conceptions."

As we have before quoted the manuscript written by General Kellerman, whom we may look upon as an adversary of Napoleon's, we shall here extract a passage from the work of Fleury de Chaboulon, one of his most enthusiastic admirers, which seems in some measure to confirm the hostile statement of the General. It proves very clearly at least, that Napoleon was not the last to leave the battle-field, as a commander ought to be, but that he was, on the contrary, very far forward in the flight!

"At the moment when Bülow forced the right of the army, I was," says our author, then Secretary of the Cabinet, "with head-quarters at the farm of Caillou.

"An aid-de-camp of the Grand Marshal's came to inform the Duke of Bassano, that the Prussians were marching on that point; but the Duke having received the Emperor's orders not to quit his station, we resolved to remain and wait the event. Hostile dragoons soon took possession of the little wood that adjoins the farm, and cut down some of our people; and though our guard drove them back by the fire of musketry, they quickly returned in force, and obliged us to make a precipitate retreat, notwithstanding all the Duke of Bassano's stoicism.

"The good stout horses harnessed to the Imperial carriages, easily outstript the pursuers. The Duke was not so fortunate; his horses were bad, his carriage was fired at, and he had to come and seek refuge in mine.

"The cessation of the fire, the hurried retreat of the remnants of the army, told too clearly the fatal issue of the battle. We inquired on all sides for the Emperor; but no one could satisfy our painful anxiety; some said he had been taken, others that he had fallen. To terminate this distressing uncertainty, I took the horse of one of our attendants, and followed by the head groom Chauvin, who had accompanied Napoleon from Elba, returned towards Mont St Jean.

"After having vainly questioned a multitude of officers, I met young Gudin the page, who assured me that the Emperor must have left the field. I was still pressing forward, when two cuirassiers, sword in hand, stopt me with the question, 'Where are you going?' 'I am going to meet the Emperor.' 'You lie; you are a Royalist, and going to meet the English.' I know not how this adventure might have terminated, if a superior officer of the Guard—a messenger from heaven I may say—had not come up and extricated me from my perilous position. He also assured me that the Emperor, whom he had long escorted, was in advance; on which I rejoined the Duke of Bassano. The certainty that Napoleon was safe and well allayed our grief for a time; but it soon returned in full force: and we should not have been Frenchmen had we contemplated our appalling catastrophe with tearless eyes."

The parties are soon obliged to leave their carriages, and continue the flight as pedestrians. Beyond the Sambre, they accidentally fall in with some of the Emperor's led horses, on which they proceed to Philipville, where they unexpectedly find Napoleon himself. "We hastened to his presence," says our author; "and he no sooner saw me than he condescended to give me his hand, which I bathed with tears. The Emperor

could not contain his own emotion; and a large tear-drop which fell from his eye betrayed the efforts of his soul."

This friendly statement proves, what would hardly have been believed on other authority, that Napoleon actually outstript in his flight the ministers and civil functionaries who had accompanied him to the field. It farther proves, what was already shown on the surrender of Paris in 1814, that this ignoble man, who never shed a single tear for other's woe, could weep over his own misfortune, and shed dastard tears in the hour of personal adversity!

After what has been said in the present Book, it should perhaps be needless to take any notice of the idle tale contained in the so-called Memoirs of Fouché. Nor should we do so, had not foreign writers, enemies of the glory of England,—and General Grolman among the rest,—endeavoured to give historical circulation to this poor fable.

The tale is, that Fouché, Napoleon's Minister of Police, deceived the Duke of Wellington at the opening of the Waterloo campaign. He had promised, as the *Memoires* tell us, to furnish the British commander with a plan of the Emperor's intended operations, and with timely notice of the proposed movement. He kept his word, and sent the information; only taking care to have his own messenger arrested before he could cross the frontier: a contrivance that caused the Allies to be surprised by Napoleon!

To some extent the world have been willing to credit this puerile tale; as if it were possible to suppose that the commander-in-chief of an army, an officer long tried in the fields of war, would actually *depend* upon the enemy's Minister of Police for information,—upon a man who, by this very promise, would have declared himself

a traitor, dishonoured and disgraced, and unworthy of the slightest trust. The Duke of Wellington would no doubt have been willing to receive good intelligence from Fouché or from any one else ; but he had been too long in the command of armies to make himself dependent on spies, whether peers or peasants. In a strategical examination of the campaign of Waterloo, published as far back as the year 1834, the present writer already exposed "this poor device of the enemy ;" and since then we learn, even from the Duke's own despatches, that his Grace never had any communication with Fouché till after the battle of Waterloo.

Many French historians assert that General Bourmont, who deserted on the 15th, revealed Napoleon's plan of operations. There is no truth in these allegations. General Bourmont arrived from Metz, and only reached the Prussian head-quarters on the 15th, when the troops were already on the march ; and had, as General Grolman declares, no information to give.

Other writers of the same nation tell us that the fall of 40,000 men, lost as they admit in the actions fought during the campaign, formed too small a deduction from the vast forces at the Emperor's disposal to have occasioned his ultimate ruin, had not treason and the conduct of the Chambers deprived him of all farther powers of action. But these are words of more sound than meaning. It may be that 40,000 men only fell by hostile arms on the fields of Ligny and Waterloo ; but it is certain that, including Grouchy's corps, which returned in some degree of order, not more than 40,000 men of the Grand Army ever again assembled round their colours ; the rest were lost to the cause, and it matters little whether they were slain, captured, or dispersed. The battles fought against the British and

Prussians cost the French therefore more than 80,000 men; and these formed the very nucleus of their military power, the foundation on which every hope of safety rested. And not only was the army destroyed, the fame of the commander also was ruined; he on whose skill, star and genius such boundless—almost enthusiastic confidence was placed, had been vanquished in open field: taken, to use his own expression, "*in flagrante delicto*;" struck down, to be for ever fallen.

The victory achieved at Waterloo was as decisive in a political as in a military point of view, and produced results of proportionate magnitude: results which the Allied commanders could fully anticipate on the very day after the action. The spoils already consisted of 240 guns, all the parks and baggage of the vanquished, even the carriage of the fugitive leader; and such a mass of trophies amply proved that a blow had been dealt which required no repetition, that there was no longer a hostile army in the field, that the road to Paris was open, and the very heart of France laid bare to the sword of the victors.

The fortune of war which turned against the French at Waterloo cannot, however, deprive them of the glory acquired by gallant soldiership even in the most fatal of their fields; but brightly as that glory will ever shine, it reflects not one ray of light on the crest of Napoleon Bonaparte. Of him posterity will only say, that he trusted his planless battle to the mere efforts of his troops; that he flung, when all was lost, his last and bravest reserves, his noble Guard, into the gulf of destruction; and then, when these brave men also fell beneath the arms of victorious foes, headed a flight which stands without a parallel in the annals of civilized warfare.

CHAPTER V.

NAPOLEON ARRIVES IN PARIS: THE CHAMBERS DECLARE THEMSELVES PERMANENT, AND TAKE PART AGAINST HIM: HE ABDICATES, AND IS SENT TO MALMAISON AND THENCE TO ROCHEFORT. NEGOTIATES WITH CAPTAIN MAITLAND, AND EMBARKS ON BOARD THE BELLEROPHON.

A HUNDRED guns, fired from the Place of the Invalids, had announced to Paris the victories of Ligny and *Quatre-Bras;* but the tidings produced little joy, and hardly dispelled for a moment the gloom of doubt and fear which, ever since the return of Napoleon, had pressed on the capital and on the empire at large. The "shadows of coming events" soon darkened the transient beam of gladness called forth by the triumphs so loudly proclaimed; and on the morning of the 20th, before it was known that any farther information had been received, rumour already told in every quarter of the city, that a great battle had been fought against the British, and that the French army was no more. As day advanced, official tidings confirmed what the general feeling of the people had so strangely and universally anticipated; and at night the capital presented a confused scene of fear and anxiety: persons and parties only meeting to inquire "what would be the fate of France,

exposed defenceless to the attack of eight hundred thousand foes all ready and in arms?"

The government no sooner received official accounts of the battle of Waterloo, than Fouché assembled at his house some of the leading members of the Chambers, among whom were La Fayette, and others known to be hostile to Napoleon. The object of the meeting was to decide on the measures to be immediately adopted for deposing the Emperor; and the Duke of Otranto, having easily flattered the weak and vain La Fayette with the hopes of acting an important part, induced him to "bell the cat," as he termed it, and take the lead in the Chamber of Representatives. It was agreed that he should next morning propose a resolution, declaring the nation in danger, the sitting of the Chambers permanent, and constituting as high treason all attempts to dissolve them by force. This was at once taking the real power out of the hands of the Emperor.

It will be recollected that Fouché, who acted the principal part on this occasion, was one of Napoleon's ministers, and that La Fayette, who became his tool, was indebted to General Bonaparte for his liberation from the dungeons of Olmütz. The sovereign against whom this league was now formed, had thus saved the one and employed and promoted the other; and though he might not personally be entitled to much respect, his worthlessness cannot screen the conspirators from the stigma that history must ever attach to treachery and ingratitude.

The Duke of Otranto had hardly allotted to his followers the parts they were to act, when, at four o'clock in the morning, Napoleon arrived at the palace of the Elysée Bourbon, where Caulaincourt received him. "The army have done wonders," were his first words.

"but a panic seized them, and they have been ruined. Ney behaved like a madman: he caused the cavalry to be massacred. I am completely exhausted; I am suffocating," he said, placing his hand on his breast.

"I intend," he resumed, "to assemble the two Chambers, and hold an Imperial Session. I shall depict to them the misfortunes that have befallen the army, apply for the means of saving the country, and instantly depart again."—"I will not conceal from your Majesty," replied the Duke of Vicenza, "that the public mind is greatly agitated; and that I fear the Representatives may not be disposed to second your wishes. Your Majesty would have done much better to have remained with the army."—"I have no army!" answered Napoleon in a voice of agony: "I might find men, indeed; but where am I to obtain arms? All, however, may be repaired if the deputies second me: you have mistaken them, the majority are good Frenchmen: I have only against me La Fayette, Lanjuinais, and Flanergues, who wish to act for themselves; but my presence will overawe them."

Having taken a bath after this conversation, in which he expressed a much higher opinion of the effects of his presence than it was found to possess, he already met his Council of Ministers between seven and eight o'clock. To disguise the truth was no longer possible: he therefore stated the defeat the army had sustained, and intimated his intention of demanding a temporary dictatorship, as the best means of saving the country. Doubts having been expressed of the willingness of the Representatives to accede to this proposal, Lucien recommended that, in case of opposition, the Emperor should place himself at the head of the six thousand Guards still remaining at Paris, and dissolve the factious assem-

blies as he had done on the 18th Brumaire. At the very moment when this advice was given, the Chambers were acting in a manner certain to excite the indignation of all honest patriots, and were laying themselves open to the blow which might have been aimed against them, had the courage to strike existed.

While the Council were deliberating, the Representatives were acting. The members were no sooner assembled in the morning, than La Fayette proposed the resolutions agreed upon with Fouché, "that the nation should be declared in danger, the sittings of the Chambers made permanent, and the armed force invited to rally round the National Representatives for the defence of the country." These decided resolutions were adopted with acclamations, and immediately communicated to the Council assembled at the palace; but instead of inspiring Napoleon with firmness and energy, they seem absolutely to have paralyzed him, and to have deprived him of all power of acting. Lucien's bold proposal was not even thought of, nor was a single step taken that evinced the slightest semblance of manly resolution.

Weakness presided at the palace, while Fortune was depriving her former favourite of the aid he expected to derive from the Chamber of Peers, which he still believed to be attached to his cause. Carnot having read to the Assembly a bulletin of the battle of Waterloo, drawn up in Napoleon's usual style, and affirming that Soult and Grouchy had collected 60,000 men at Laon prepared to meet the enemy, was directly contradicted by Marshal Ney, who had that moment arrived. "The report which has been read to you," said the fiery soldier, "is totally false; the enemy is victorious on all points; I witnessed the disorder, for I commanded under the Emperor. To tell us after the disastrous combats of

the 16th and 18th, that we have beaten the enemy, is an absolute falsehood. The enemy are with 80,000 men at Nivelles, and may reach Paris in six or seven days; and the safety of the country, therefore, demands that negotiations should be immediately entered into with the Allies."

This bold declaration, the truth of which could not be denied, produced a strong effect. It deprived Napoleon of all the aid he had anticipated from the Peers, who, alarmed by Ney's account of the desperate situation of affairs, joined the Chamber of Representatives in their anxious desire for the Emperor's abdication.

The populace and the Federates were at this time expressing very different sentiments. Large parties of these dangerous bands were parading opposite the *Elysée,* shouting *Vive l'Empereur!* and evincing the most perfect readiness for immediate action. "What have I done for the people?" said Napoleon, on hearing these acclamations; "I found them poor, and I leave them poor, and yet they love me; while the men I have overwhelmed with favours are striving to effect my ruin."

But not even this promise of aid could give him energy, and the day passed on without any measure of vigour being adopted. Message after message was sent to the Representatives, who perceiving how completely their adversary was humbled, became bolder and more insolent at every step; and though they still refrained from demanding his abdication, opinions were loudly expressed, not only in both Chambers but generally in the capital, that it ought to be immediately tendered; the Emperor's presence forming, as they thought, the only obstacle to an immediate settlement with the Allies.

A commission had been appointed to concert with the

authorities on the best means of arresting the advance of the enemy; but when General Grenier attempted in the morning to make a report of their proceedings, he could not even obtain a hearing; nothing, it was evident, would now satisfy the Assembly but an immediate abdication, which was loudly called for from every part of the hall. On the motion of General Solignac, it was therefore resolved that a commission should be named to wait upon the Emperor, and urge his resolution on this point. "I only ask for an hour's delay to save the honour of the sovereign," said the General; "were I asking for a day, objections might be made; but a single hour."—"If at the expiration of that time his abdication is not received," added La Fayette, indulging to the last in his envious hatred of Napoleon, "I shall then move for his deposition!"

The account of these proceedings, which Lucien brought to the palace, threw Napoleon into the greatest possible agitation. Sometimes he spoke of dissolving the Assembly by military force; at others, of committing suicide; but ended the ignoble scene of boasts and threats by tamely submitting to the dictates of his enemies. The hour granted by La Fayette had hardly expired, before the abdication was handed to the President, and read aloud to the exulting Assembly. It was conceived in the following terms:—

"Frenchmen!—In commencing the war for national independence, I relied on the union of all efforts, all wills, and all authorities. I had reason to hope for success, and braved the declarations of the Allied powers against me. But circumstances appear to have changed, and I now offer myself as a sacrifice to the hatred of the enemies of France. May they prove sincere in their declaration that they aim only at me; my political life

is terminated, and I proclaim my son, Napoleon II., Emperor of the French. Unite for the public safety if you would remain an independent nation.—Done at the Palace of the Elysée, 22d June 1815.

"NAPOLEON."

Searched from first to last, the annals of the world record no descent from lofty power and sovereign station so discreditable to the fallen as this craven abdication, so readily and submissively tendered on the mere demand of an Assembly of incapable demagogues. Far, very far be it from us to advocate or even to defend suicide; but compared to this tameness of conduct, the stroke that Cato dealt was "godlike" indeed. Napoleon could not withstand the might of banded Europe, which his reckless ambition had called down upon the country; but there were a thousand modes of descending with dignity from his throne, instead of allowing himself to be driven from his high estate by the vulgar clamour of the mob assembled in the Chamber of Representatives, and whom a single company of his Guards, or band of Federates, would have dispersed by their mere appearance. It is absolutely humiliating to record such a total want of all noble pride, feeling and courage on the part of a man who so long swayed the destiny of millions.

The Chambers received the abdication with boundless demonstrations of joy, believing that they had only to proclaim the Sovereignty of the People, and resume the authority formerly exercised by the Convention. These incapable men were weak enough to suppose that victorious armies would halt at their bidding, and that Europe had sent forth its myriads to receive their word as a guarantee of future peace and security. Their conduct met, however, with its just reward, when, all

hoarse from noisy declamations against the Bourbons, they were thrust forth from the halls of their folly by a picquet of Prussian Landwehr!

The Imperial abdication having left the State without a sovereign, the first step of the Chambers was to appoint a Provisional Government. It consisted of five members,—Fouché, Carnot, Caulaincourt, General Grenier, and M. Quinette. Fouché immediately became president, and was thus invested with the absolute power at which he had so long aimed. La Fayette, having vainly endeavoured to secure a place in the commission, sank back into his natural insignificance. The Chambers also thought it right to express their gratitude to Napoleon for the great sacrifice he had made to the national happiness and independence, and sent a commission of their members to thank him accordingly. Dressed in Imperial robes, and surrounded by the Officers of State, the fallen monarch received the deputation with calmness; and replied to their address in the following words: "I thank you for the sentiments you express towards me. I wish that my abdication may secure the happiness of France; but I do not expect that it will; for it leaves the nation without a chief, and without political existence. The time lost in overthrowing the monarchy might have been employed in placing the country in a state to crush the enemy. I advise the Chambers instantly to reinforce the armies; for those who wish for peace must be prepared for war. Fear to be deceived; and do not place this great empire at the mercy of strangers. In whatever situation I may find myself, I shall ever be satisfied if France is happy. I recommend my son to your care, and hope France will never forget that I abdicated for him; as it is only with my dynasty that the country can ever be happy, free and independent."

This speech shows very plainly that Napoleon's feelings were not in harmony with the exterior calmness of deportment ascribed to him by historians : for his words are evidently those of passion and reproof ; and testify even against himself for having yielded to men who had no legal claim to call for an abdication, least of all at a moment of national peril, and when it "left France without a chief and without political existence."

With this ceremony ended Napoleon's reign ; and with his reign not only the respect paid to the sovereign, but the very courtesy due to one who had so long ruled over France, and before whom those who were now to insult him had so long bowed with abject submission. The claims of Napoleon II. were at first totally disregarded ; and it was only after stormy debates and the threats of the fiery La Bedoyére, that the son was at last acknowledged. The palace of the Elysée Bourbon was deserted almost as soon as the abdication became known ; and the sovereign, who is described by so many writers as gaining the hearts of all who approached him, was not only

> "Abandoned in his utmost need
> By those his former bounty fed,"

but plundered in the most shameful manner, robbed of jewels, trinkets, and large sums of money, by individuals who, according to Montholon, must have stood very near his person, and could not have belonged to the class of menials. On the 24th, the deposed Emperor already found himself obliged to retire to Malmaison, where he was received by Hortense Beauharnais. Here he was in fact a prisoner, watched by the police of Fouché, and surrounded by a guard under the command of General Becker, and composed of soldiers

of the National Guard of Paris, all known to be attached to the royal cause.

It was the fallen monarch's intention to retire to America; and the Provisional Government, anxious for his departure, fearing that he might resume the supreme authority, ordered two frigates stationed at Rochefort to be prepared for his reception. But he still lingered with evident though undefined hopes of returning power, while the approach of Grouchy's soldiers, together with the wrecks of Waterloo, seemed to tempt him with the opportunity of again placing himself at the head of an army, and resuming the authority he had so unwillingly abdicated. Message after message was sent to Malmaison, urging him to depart for Rochefort, and place himself in safety beyond the reach of the Allied forces, now rapidly advancing on Paris. Fouché applied even, with a very suspicious degree of zeal, to the Duke of Wellington to obtain a safe-conduct for him to the United States. It was not likely that the British Commander could have authority to grant such passports; but it was very certain that he would communicate the application to his Government, who would not fail to take the best measures for intercepting the flight of the ex-Emperor. And so, indeed, it happened. The Duke declared he had no instructions to grant the required passports; and the English Government, informed of Napoleon's intended voyage, instantly stationed thirty ships of war along the west coast of France.

Still he lingered at Malmaison; and when the Allied armies, following on the traces of Soult and Grouchy, drew round the capital, he applied to the Provisional Government for permission to assume the command of his former troops, as General for Napoleon II. "The Allies had," he said, "exposed their left flank, had laid

themselves fairly open to attack; and if allowed to command, he would crush them, and force them to grant honourable terms to France; and having done so, would immediately set out upon his journey."

The Government very naturally declined this offer, and again urged his immediate departure more pressingly than before, directing Marshal Davoust, the Minister of War, to adopt if necessary even measures of coercion for obliging him to leave the neighbourhood of the capital. The Marshal, who had always been one of the most zealous and ruthless executors of Napoleon's tyrannical decrees, did not belie the brutal nature of his character; and declared that he would go to Malmaison, and arrest him with his own hands, if his journey were further delayed. And even here we find Napoleon uttering threats which he dare not execute: he first declared that he would await his fate where he was; and then that he would seize the command of the army despite the decree of the "Five Emperors," as he called the members of the Commission; but instead of carrying these boasts into effect, he ended by submitting to the orders of those to whom he had so tamely resigned his power!

At three o'clock in the morning of the 29th, a message *commanding* his departure was received; and at five in the afternoon, all "Imperial hopes" being at an end, he threw himself, greatly agitated, into his carriage, and accompanied by Generals Bertrand, Savary, and Becker, the commander of his Guard, commenced his journey to Rochefort. It is said that he was greatly affected on parting from the Princess Hortense, as well as at the idea of quitting France for ever; but these feelings, from whatever source they may have arisen, could not suppress the selfishness that ruled him to the last: for

even his stay at Malmaison had been employed in gathering together the most valuable effects from the different palaces near Paris, and these he now carried along with him in his exile. Fame and memory would have been sufficient for a great man who had so long swayed the destiny of empires; but Napoleon felt that he could not dwell upon his, and therefore required toys and trinkets!

He had at first signified his intention of proceeding without delay to Rochefort, but already halted for the night at Rambouillet, and again despatched couriers to Paris in hopes that the government would recall him. Disappointed in this expectation, he resumed his journey in the morning, without meeting any of the insults he had experienced after the abdication at Fontainbleau. At Niort he was even received with enthusiasm by the troops; the shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" again awakened his hopes, and he desired General Becker to write once more to the Provisional Government, and offer them his services in the field. "Tell them," he said, "that they are ill informed of the general state of the feeling in France, and have been in too great haste to send me away. Had my offer of service been accepted, affairs would have assumed a very different aspect. It will even now be in my power to exercise great influence by supporting their negotiations at the head of an army, to which my name will serve as a rallying point."

Napoleon reached Rochefort on the 3d July, and was received with courtesy and attention by the authorities; but his evident reluctance to leave the country had again alarmed the Provisional Government, who, in answer to his letter from Niort, sent the most pressing orders for his departure, directing the authorities to use force if necessary; as his services, they said, could not be accepted.

With a degree of inconsistency which has greatly the appearance of treachery, the commanders of the frigates directed to convey him to the United States, were prohibited from executing their commission, "if it endangered the safety of the vessels." And when the ex-Emperor afterwards embarked on board the *Saale*, to take advantage of any favourable opportunity that might present itself, an order arrived from Paris, declaring that the captain who should again allow him to land on the continent of France, would be deemed guilty of high treason. This was almost obliging the unhappy fugitive to throw himself into the hands of the British, who now blockaded the port. Various projects of escape were however debated, though never tried, before this last resolution was finally adopted. First, a Danish merchant-ship was hired, and an attempt made to fit up a place of concealment in the hold: next, some gallant young midshipmen offered to form the crew of a small coasting-vessel, and try to escape during the night. General L'Allemand had effected the passage to Bordeaux, found the river free from blockade, and an American vessel willing to receive the Emperor, and proposed that an effort should be made to reach the Garonne. But none of these plans—though they destroy all claim to the pretended magnanimity of a voluntary surrender to the British—were thought to hold out any fair prospect of success; and yet a resolution had to be adopted, for the French army had retired to the Loire, and the English and Prussian forces had entered Paris, where Louis XVIII. was already acknowledged. Every day might bring an order to arrest the Imperial fugitive; and late events had shown that little reliance was to be placed on the forbearance or delicacy of his former subordinates. Their conduct proved too clearly that they did not look upon

him as surrounded by any halo of glory, or power of majesty, capable of protecting him from the most unworthy treatment.

As there appeared no possibility of escaping the vigilance of the English, it was resolved to negotiate with their commander. "Wherever wood can float," said Napoleon, "there I am sure to meet the flag of England." On the 10th of July, Las Cases and Savary repaired with a flag of truce on board the *Bellerophon*, to inquire, as they said, whether a safe-conduct, promised to the Emperor for his voyage to America, had been received by Captain Maitland. As it had never been intended to grant such a safe-conduct, a circumstance they were already perfectly aware of, the captain could only answer that his orders were to make every effort to prevent the escape of Napoleon, and to sail with him for England, in case he should be so fortunate as to obtain possession of his person. The attempts made by the ambassadors to persuade Captain Maitland, that as the Emperor's removal from France was altogether voluntary, it ought not to be interrupted, produced no effect on the resolution of the British officer, who declared that it was a point the Government might settle at pleasure, and with which he had nothing to do. All they could obtain from him was, that *as a private individual* he had no reason to doubt but that Napoleon, if he sailed for England in the *Bellerophon*, would be well treated there.

On the 14th, the several ambassadors again returned, and in the presence of Captain Sartorius and Captain Gambier of the Navy, held another conversation with Captain Maitland on the subject of Napoleon's embarkation. On this occasion, as on the former, Maitland distinctly told the French officers, that he had no

authority to give Napoleon any pledge whatever, and could only promise, in case he came on board the *Bellerophon*, to convey him safely to the coast of England, there to abide the determination of Government. Captains Sartorius and Gambier both fully confirm this statement. On the other hand, L'Allemand and Las Cases affirmed, that at the interview on the 14*th July*, Captain Maitland gave a pledge that Napoleon, if he came on board the *Bellerophon*, should be received there not as a prisoner of war, but as a guest; and that it was solely in consequence of this pledge that Napoleon finally resolved to embark.

No one is likely to receive the evidence of Napoleon's followers, of persons brought up almost in the school of deception, against the word of British officers certain to forfeit rank and honour if detected in the slightest deviation from truth in the discharge of a public duty, even of the most trivial and unimportant nature. There is, besides, another proof of the accuracy of Maitland's statements, and one that the French themselves will hardly venture to dispute: it is the *date* of Napoleon's letter to the Prince Regent of England, which General Gourgaud brought out on the same evening, and which clearly shows that the resolution to embark on board the *Bellerophon* was already adopted before L'Allemand and Las Cases held their conversation with the British officers on the 14th July:—

"*Rochefort*, 13*th July* 1815.

"Royal Highness,—A victim to the factions that divide my country, and to the hostility of the greatest powers of Europe, I have terminated my political career, and come, like Themistocles, to seat myself on the hearth of the British people. I place myself under the

protection of their laws, which I claim from your Royal Highness, as the most powerful, the most constant, and most generous of my enemies.

"NAPOLEON."

Captain Maitland promised to send on Gourgaud with this letter, and then addressed Las Cases in these words: —"You will recollect that I am not authorised to stipulate for the reception of Napoleon in England, and that he must consider himself as entirely at the disposal of the Government." No objection having been urged against this explicit declaration, preparations were made for the reception of the fallen Emperor.

On the 15th, the *Epervier* conveyed him out of Aix-roads; but wind and tide being unfavourable, the barge of the *Bellerophon* was sent to bring him on board; the crew of the French vessel continuing to cheer him as long as their voices could be heard. On reaching the quarter-deck of the *Bellerophon*, Napoleon took off his hat, and in a firm voice said, "I come to place myself under the protection of your prince and laws!" He was received with marked respect by Captain Maitland and his officers; but without any royal honour or salute.

The same and very natural reason which had rendered him so popular on board the *Undaunted*, produced a similar effect on board the *Bellerophon*, where he soon became a great favourite with the officers and crew. As before, he examined and praised every thing, extolled the English nation, above all the English navy, and even admitted, we are told, that the Duke of Wellington, "his equal in all other military qualities, was his superior in prudence." On the 23d, the voyagers passed Ushant; and Napoleon for the last time beheld the coast of France, on which he gazed long and mournfully. On

the following day the *Bellerophon* anchored in Torbay, and Maitland was instantly ordered to permit no communication between his ship and the shore.

On the 26th, they were ordered into Plymouth Sound; and as the arrival of Napoleon had already transpired, the *Bellerophon* was surrounded by swarms of boats filled with people, who greeted the ex-Emperor with loud huzzas whenever he appeared on deck. These cheers, so natural to the buoyant and generous feeling of the English people, seemed to afford him great satisfaction: he acknowledged them in the most courteous manner, with bows and smiles, as they encouraged him to hope for a favourable reception in the country.

A different fate was, however, reserved for him; and on the 31st of July, Sir Henry Bunbury, under Secretary of State, and Lord Keith, Admiral of the station, accompanied by Mr Meike, his Lordship's secretary, arrived on board of the *Bellerophon*, and announced the resolution of the British Government. It was to the following effect:—That *General Bonaparte* should not be landed in England, but removed to St Helena, as being the situation in which, more than any other at their command, the Government thought security against a second escape and the indulgence to himself of personal freedom and exercise would be best reconciled. It was also intimated, that with the exception of Savary and L'Allemand, he might take with him his surgeon, any three officers of his suite, and twelve domestics.

This communication was read in French by Sir Henry Bunbury; and Napoleon, already prepared for its import by the London newspapers, listened to it without impatience, emotion, or interruption of any kind. The conversation that followed we give on the authority of Sir Walter Scott, who drew up the state-

ment from the minutes of Sir Henry Bunbury and of Mr Meike.

"When he"—Napoleon—"was requested to state if he had any reply to make, he began with great calmness of manner and mildness of countenance, to declare that he solemnly protested against the orders which had been read; that the British ministry had no right to dispose of him in the way proposed; that he appealed to the British people and the laws, and asked what was the tribunal to which he ought to appeal. 'I am come,' he continued, 'voluntarily to throw myself on the hospitality of your nation. I am not a prisoner of war; and if I were, have a right to be treated according to the law of nations. But I am come to this country a passenger on board one of your vessels, after a previous negotiation with the commander. If he had told me that I was to be a prisoner, I would not have come. I asked him if he was willing to receive me on board, and convey me to England. *Admiral* Maitland said he was; having received, or telling me he had received, special orders of Government concerning me. It was a snare then that had been spread for me. I came on board a British vessel as I would have entered one of your towns,—a vessel, a village, it is the same thing. As for the island of St Helena, it would be my sentence of death. I demand to be received as an English citizen. How many years entitle me to be domiciliated?'

"Sir Henry Bunbury answered, that he believed four were necessary. 'Well, then,' continued Napoleon, 'let the Prince Regent during that time place me under any superintendence he thinks proper: let me be placed in a country-house in the centre of the island, thirty leagues from every seaport: place a commissioned officer about me, to examine my correspondence and superin-

tend my actions ; or if the Prince Regent should require my word of honour, perhaps I might give it. I might then enjoy a certain degree of personal liberty, and I should have the freedom of literature. In St Helena I could not live three months : to my habits and constitution it would be death. I am used to ride twenty miles a-day : what am I to do on that little rock at the end of the world? No! Botany Bay is better than St Helena : I prefer death to St Helena : and what good is my death to do you? I am no longer a sovereign. What danger could result from my living as a private person in the heart of England, and restricted in any way which the Government should think proper?'

"He referred repeatedly to the manner of his coming on board the *Bellerophon ;* insisting upon his being perfectly free in his choice, and that he had preferred confiding to the hospitality and generosity of the British nation.

"'Otherwise,' he said, 'why should I not have gone to my father-in-law, or to the Emperor Alexander, who is my personal friend? We have become enemies because he wanted to annex Poland to his dominions, and my popularity among the Poles was in his way. But otherwise he was my friend, and he would not have treated me in this way. If your Government act thus, it will disgrace you in the eyes of Europe. Even your own people will blame it. Besides, you do not know the feeling that my death will create both in France and Italy. There is at present a high opinion of England in these countries. If you kill me it will be lost, and the lives of many English will be sacrificed. What was there to force me to the steps I took? The tri-coloured flag was still flying at Bordeaux, Nantes, and Rochefort. The army has not even yet submitted. Or, if I had chosen

to remain in France, what was there to prevent me from remaining concealed for years amongst a people so much attached to me?'

"He then returned to his negotiation with Captain Maitland, and dwelt on the honours and attentions shown to him personally by that officer and Admiral Hotham. 'And, after all, it was only a snare for me!' He again enlarged on the disgrace to England which was impending. 'I hold out to the Prince Regent,' he said, 'the brightest page in his history, in placing myself at his discretion. I have made war upon you for twenty years, and I give you the highest proof of confidence by voluntarily giving myself into the hands of my most inveterate and constant enemies. Remember,' he continued, 'what I have been, and how I stood among the sovereigns of Europe. *This* courted my protection—*that* gave me his daughter—all sought for my friendship. I was Emperor acknowledged by all the powers in Europe except Great Britain, and she had acknowledged me as Chief Consul. Your Government has no right to term me *General Bonaparte*,' he added, pointing with his finger to the offensive epithet in Lord Melville's letter. 'I am Prince, or Consul, and ought to be treated as such, if treated with at all. When I was at Elba, I was at least as much a sovereign in that island as Louis on the throne of France. We had both our respective flags, our ships, our troops. Mine, to be sure,' he said with a smile, 'were rather on a small scale. I had six hundred soldiers, and he had two hundred thousand. At length I made war upon him, defeated him, and dethroned him. But there was nothing in this to deprive me of my rank as one of the sovereigns of Europe.'

"During this interesting scene Napoleon spoke with little interruption from Lord Keith and Sir Henry Bun-

bury, who declined replying to his remonstrances, stating themselves to be unauthorised to enter into discussions, as their only duty was to convey the intentions of Government to Napoleon, and transmit his answer, if he charged them with any. He repeated again and again his determination not to go to St Helena, and his desire to be suffered to remain in Great Britain.

"Sir Henry Bunbury then said, he was certain that St Helena had been selected as the place of his residence, because its local situation allowed freer scope for exercise and indulgence, than could have been permitted in any part of Great Britain.

"'No, no,' repeated Bonaparte, with animation, 'I will not go there. You would not go there, Sir, were it your own case? nor, my Lord, would you?' Lord Keith bowed and answered, 'He had been already at St Helena four times.' Napoleon went on reiterating his protestations against being imprisoned or sent to St Helena. '*I will not go* thither,' he repeated: 'I am not a Hercules, (with a smile,) but you shall not conduct me to St Helena. I prefer death in this place. You found me free, send me back again; replace me in the condition in which I was, or permit me to go to America.'

"He dwelt much on his resolution to die rather than to go to St Helena: he had got no great reason, he said, to wish for life. He urged the Admiral to take no further steps to remove him into the *Northumberland*, before Government should have been informed of what he had said, and have signified their final decision. He conjured Sir Henry Bunbury to use no delay in communicating his answer to Government, and referred himself to Sir Henry to put it into form. After some cursory questions and pauses, he again returned to the

pressing subject, and urged the same arguments as before. 'He had expected,' he said, 'to have had liberty to land, and settle himself in the country; some commissioner being named to attend him, who would be of great use for a year or two to teach him what he had to do. You could choose,' he said, 'some respectable man: for the English service must have officers distinguished for probity and honour; and do not put about me an intriguing person, who would only play the spy and make cabals.' He declared again his determination not to go to St Helena; and this interesting interview was concluded.

"After the Admiral and Sir Henry Bunbury had left the cabin, Napoleon recalled Lord Keith, whom, in respect of his former attention to his Lordship's relative, Captain Elphinstone, he might consider as more favourable to his person.

"Napoleon opened the conversation by asking Lord Keith's advice how to conduct himself. Lord Keith replied, that he was an officer, and had discharged his duty, and left with him the heads of his instructions. If he considered it necessary to renew the discussion, Sir Henry Bunbury must be called in. Bonaparte said that was unnecessary. 'Can you,' said he, 'after what is passed, detain me until I hear from London?' Lord Keith replied, that must depend on the instructions brought by the other Admiral, with which he was unacquainted. 'Was there any tribunal,' he asked, 'to which he could apply?' Lord Keith answered, that he was no civilian, but believed that there was none whatever. He added, that he was satisfied there was every disposition on the part of the British Government to render his situation as comfortable as prudence would permit. 'How so?' said Napoleon, lifting the paper

from the table, and speaking with animation. Upon Lord Keith's observing, 'that it was surely preferable to being confined to a smaller space in England, or being sent to France, or perhaps to Russia.'—'Russia!' exclaimed Bonaparte, 'God preserve me from it!'

"During this remarkable scene, Napoleon's manner was perfectly calm and collected; his voice equal and firm, his tones very pleasing. Once or twice only he spoke more rapidly, and in a harsher key. He used little gesticulation, and his attitudes were ungraceful; but the action of the head was dignified, and the countenance remarkably soft and placid, without any marks of severity. He seemed to have made up his mind, anticipating what was to be announced, and perfectly prepared to reply. In expressing his positive determination not to go to St Helena, he left it to his hearers to infer whether he meant to prevent his removal by suicide, or to resist it by force."

Let us now offer a few remarks on this protest; as it may be hoped that the angry feelings excited at the time by the fierce clamour of Napoleon's friends and adherents, supported as they were by political adversaries of the British Ministers, have now given way to calmer and more rational views of the conduct pursued towards the ex-Emperor.

From the measures adopted by the provisional Government, it is evident that when he surrendered to the British, Napoleon had no other alternative left. He might, perhaps, notwithstanding the order from Paris which made it high treason to land him on the continent of France, have escaped and joined the troops retiring to the Loire. But in a country where events had proved that he had no influential party, no friends but the soldiers, what would have been his fate and theirs, deprived

of the protection of all laws, and exposed, without resources, to the attacks of nearly a million of enemies? Would even the troops have exchanged the character of national soldiers for that of Free Companions, when the royal authority was again acknowledged in Paris and in all the principal cities of the empire? The Generals and superior officers certainly would not; and their defection would most certainly have thinned the ranks of an army already weak in numbers and broken by recent defeat.

Nor could he surrender himself to "his friend," as he termed the Emperor of Russia, or to his father-in-law the Emperor of Austria; for even if he had effected a landing from the Isle of Aix, he must have traversed entire provinces in which the royal authority was already established, and some of which were even occupied by Prussian troops,—the most dreaded of all his enemies. It was indeed the danger of the much shorter land journey, from Rochefort to the neighbourhood of Bordeaux, which, according to Norvins, who is good authority on these transactions, prevented him from seeking refuge on board an American ship in the Garonne. Every mode of escape had been considered, and found either impracticable or attended with more danger than he was willing to encounter; and as Captain Maitland had granted and could grant no terms, his only resource was an unconditional surrender to the British; which, if it did not ensure perfect liberty,—and this Las Cases admits that he did not expect,—ensured at least personal safety.

That Captain Maitland granted no conditions was admitted by Napoleon himself, when he acknowledged to that officer the sense he entertained of the courteous and honourable treatment he had experienced on board

the *Bellerophon;* and proposed, through General Montholon, to present him with his portrait set in diamonds as a token of his regard.

His demand to be treated as Emperor by the British Government, can only be looked upon as a puerility, maintained for the purpose of having some cause of complaint always at hand. England had never acknowledged him as Emperor when he was at the height of power; and to have given him the title when he was a prisoner would, by ordinary mortals, have been considered an insult rather than a mark of respect, and would naturally have excited the suspicion and just displeasure of the Royal Government of France.

By assuming any other title, such as Count, Duke, Baron, as usually practised by sovereigns when travelling beyond the limits of their own dominions, he might have spared himself all the disputes with the English authorities. But this was not his object: entertaining to the last hopes of empire and escape, it was his business to have complaints, to keep himself as much as possible before the world; to excite kindly and compassionate feelings in his favour as an injured individual, suffering from the vengeful oppression of enemies who had betrayed the confidence he had so generously reposed in them.

"Bonaparte, in his days of success, always," says Mr Lockhart, "attached more importance to etiquette than a prince born to the purple and not quite a fool would have been likely to do; but in the obstinacy with which, after his total downfall, he clung to the airy sound of Majesty and such pigmy toys of observance as could be obtained under his circumstances, we cannot persuade ourselves to behold more than the sickly vanity of a *parvenu.*"

The right of the Allied powers to detain him a prisoner is equally clear. He had violated the treaty of Fontainbleau, which, after the peace of 1814, allowed him most injudiciously to retain the sovereignty of Elba, and had thus forfeited all claim which that liberal compact gave him: and what security could he offer to Europe that, if left at liberty, he would not again disturb the peace of the world? His last breach of word had forced nations to assemble in arms from the Tagus to the distant Neva; and the blood of fifty thousand valiant men had stained the battle-fields of Belgium to atone for the ill-requited liberality of 1814. And how, after paying such a price for their error, could the Sovereigns of Europe have ventured upon another experiment of a similar nature? Were peace and war to be constantly suspended in the balance, in order that a degree of extravagant liberality, as contrary to the dictates of sound policy as of humanity, might be displayed in favour of a ruthless man, who had never hesitated, when it suited his interest, to break engagements however solemnly pledged? In politics, overstrained pity or humanity may lead to the ultimate sufferings of thousands; and how could the French Government have been consolidated in a manner to give security to Europe, had Napoleon—the polar star of all the factions created by so many years of convulsion—been left at liberty in England, within a few hours' sail of the coast; or even in America, whence he could at any time have returned with the most perfect facility? It would, we are sure, be an insult to the reader to argue this subject at farther length.

By declaring that "he would not go to St Helena," the ex-Emperor intended no doubt to insinuate the intention of committing suicide; and his followers loudly

proclaimed their conviction that such was his resolution. These threats did not, however, shake the English authorities, who justly considered, perhaps, that he who had calmly submitted to be dethroned by the wretched demagogues of the Chamber of Representatives, was not likely to fall on his own sword to escape a voyage to St Helena. Generals Gourgaud, L'Allemand, and Savary, had also the folly to assert, that rather than see him carried into distant captivity, they would immolate him with their own hands; but Captain Maitland having given them to understand that, under British jurisdiction, this species of heroism might lead to the scaffold, nothing more was heard of unworthy threats that could not fail to lower in general estimation those who made and dared not execute them. The only consequence of these foolish bravadoes was, that the parties were all, with the exception of Napoleon, deprived of their arms.*

Some persons having taken out a summons to bring the ex-Emperor to London, as a witness in a case of libel, the *Bellerophon* was obliged to put to sea, and remain cruising off the Start Point till joined by the squadron destined for St Helena. Notwithstanding his previous threats, Napoleon heard the intimation, that Admiral Sir George Cockburn was ready to receive him on board the *Northumberland* with the most perfect calmness and resignation. His baggage underwent the

* Count Montholon tells us indeed, that Lord Keith advanced in pompous and stately form, and demanded Napoleon's sword in name of the British Government; but shrunk back appalled from the glance of the Emperor's eye! The same writer also assures us that it was the intention of the English ministry to cause Napoleon to be shot by the sentence of a court-martial. We quote these puerilities to show what the partisans of this boasted man are capable of publishing to the world.

form of a search; and his treasure, consisting of 4000 Napoleons in gold, was taken in deposit by the British Government; but his attendants were allowed to take whatever sum they thought might be necessary for immediate use. His plate, mostly of gold, and of great value, was however left untouched. His suite, as finally arranged, consisted of General Count Bertrand, Grand Master of the Palace; General Count Montholon; Count Las Cases; General Gourgaud, his aid-de camp; and Doctor O'Meara, an Irish naval surgeon, whom he found in the *Bellerophon*, and who was, at his desire, transferred to the *Northumberland*. Bertrand and Montholon were accompanied by their respective Countesses and some children. Twelve upper domestics of the imperial household also followed their master's fortune.

On the morning of the 7th August, Lord Keith arrived in his barge to convey the exile on board the *Northumberland;* and at one o'clock, Napoleon having expressed his readiness to depart, all set forward. A captain's guard, drawn up on the quarter-deck, presented arms under three rolls of drum, as he passed; and on leaving the *Bellerophon* he took a polite and courteous leave of her captain.

Cruelly and unjustly as this gallant officer had been attacked by Las Cases, Savary, and by Napoleon, it is nevertheless in these affecting words that he records his final sentiments towards his prisoner:—"It may appear surprising that a possibility should exist for a British officer being prejudiced in favour of one who caused so many calamities to his country; but to such an extent did he possess the power of pleasing, that there are few people who could have sat at the same table with him for nearly a month, as I did, without feeling a sensation of pity, perhaps allied to regret, that a man possessed of

so many fascinating qualities, and who had held so high a station in life, should be reduced to the situation in which I saw him."

We deem these sentiments highly creditable to Captain Maitland's feelings, little as they can influence the decision of history in drawing the portrait of Napoleon. Pity and generous sympathy for the misfortunes of others are natural attributes of the brave, and would be most readily called into action when excited by the altered fortunes of one who had stood on the highest pinnacle of worldly greatness; and was now reduced to come a wandering outcast, and solicit protection from the very enemies he had so long persecuted. All the darker shades of character were shrouded by the lustre which the fame of mighty genius still cast around him; and he was, above all, recommended to the favour of a British sailor, by appearing as a disarmed and vanquished foe, and therefore known only as a friend. The fallen Emperor, oppressed by adversity but surrounded by his fame, seeking the hospitable shelter of the *Bellerophon*, could hardly, in that lowly state, fail to interpose between Captain Maitland and the true portraiture of the man who, for the gratification of his own ambition, had spread desolation over so many countries. But the writer who in the search of truth gives the testimony of Captain Maitland, is also bound to show the causes which led that gallant officer to receive impressions completely at variance with those which history must strive to convey of the character of his guest.

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Blücher, and could not fail to be well informed. The work is written in a spirit of decided hostility to the British army and the Duke of Wellington.

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BOOK FIFTH.

ST HELENA.

"'TIS DONE—BUT YESTERDAY A KING!
AND ARMED WITH KINGS TO STRIVE—
AND NOW THOU ART A NAMELESS THING:
SO ABJECT—YET ALIVE!"

BYRON.

BOOK FIFTH.

ST HELENA.

CHAPTER I.

NAPOLEON AT ST HELENA: HIS LIFE AT LONGWOOD. THE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED UPON HIM, AND HIS ALLEGED GRIEVANCES. HIS LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

The ex-Emperor was received on board the *Northumberland* with the same honours paid to him on leaving the *Bellerophon*. But Sir George Cockburn, in treating his guest with all possible courtesy and attention, treated him only as a general officer of the highest rank; and departed, by order of the Admiralty, from some of those marks of respect which Captain Maitland, who was without instructions on the subject, had paid him on board the *Bellerophon*. The Admiral reserved to himself the first place on board the *Northumberland*, did the honours of his own table, and did not think it necessary to break up his party immediately after dinner, because Napoleon chose to rise in accordance with the custom of French society. Sir George also remained covered on the quarter-deck after the first salutation was over, and disregarded other particulars of etiquette observed to-

wards crowned heads. This supposed discourtesy, which excited the indignation of Napoleon's suite, caused at first some coolness between the Admiral and his guests; but as the latter paid no attention to these marks of displeasure, remained kind and courteous, without in the least deviating from the strict line of conduct which duty imposed upon him, the parties were soon reconciled, and continued on good terms during the voyage.

The squadron reached St Helena on the 15th October; and on the following day, Napoleon, impatient to quit the ship, landed and took up his abode at the *Briars*,—a cottage belonging to Mr Balcombe, where he remained till a house could be prepared for his reception. There was little choice; and after some examination, Longwood, a villa six miles from Jamestown, and usually the summer residence of the Lieutenant-Governor, was selected for his future abode. Napoleon had examined and expressed himself well pleased with it; and next to Plantation House, the residence of the Governor, it was in fact the best house on the island. Sir George Cockburn used every exertion to place it in the best possible condition for the reception of its extraordinary inmate; and on the 10th December, the exile and his suite took possession of their new dwelling. Count and Countess Montholon occupying, with their children, a small house near the grounds.

During his stay at the *Briars*, the ex-Emperor had occupied only two rooms in a small pavilion of Mr Balcombe's garden, and entirely separated from his suite. He had nevertheless made himself very agreeable to the family, especially to the young ladies, and submitted with apparent good humour to the narrowness of his accommodation, and to the want of exercise,—an evil occasioned entirely by his refusal to ride out in com-

pany with a British officer. Notwithstanding some ebullitions of violence, he also continued to live on terms of perfect civility with Sir George Cockburn: "and there seemed," we are told, "no reason to doubt, that when fairly established with his suite about him, he would gradually reconcile himself to the situation in which he was likely to remain, and turn his powerful faculties upon some study or pursuit worthy of their energy, and capable of cheating captivity of half its bitterness." These anticipations were not realized. Nor could they be so; because "the powerful faculties" and mental energy, on the supposed existence of which they were formed, were entirely wanting. Lord Byron judged better when he wrote the following stanza:—

"Thou Timour, in his captive's cage,
What thoughts will there be thine,
While brooding in thy prison'd rage,
But one—'the world was mine!'
Unless like he of Babylon,
All sense is with thy sceptre gone;
Life will not long confine
That spirit poured so wildly forth—
So long obeyed—so little worth."

And Napoleon is at St Helena! The absolute, but restless and unsatisfied ruler of the fairest kingdoms of the earth, is a captive confined to a small island in the midst of the ocean: and he whose word was law to millions, who made Europe tremble at his name, is an exile, far removed from the busy world over which he held sway, and circumscribed in his very walks by the challenge of watchful sentinels! And how does he brook such reverse of fortune, and support a fall deeper than any history has yet recorded, or the wildest fancy dared

to embody in romance? With great means great actions may be performed; but real greatness alone can be great in adversity: and how will Napoleon establish his title to such claim? Here is the time to brave the frowns of fate—

"———————— to smile
With a sedate and all-enduring eye,"

and display in full lustre the high and noble mind, the firm granite character so loudly vaunted in the hour of fortune. Hitherto the world have only seen the mighty victor through the splendour of the brilliant events which illustrated his time. The flashes of a hundred battles,—the gem-sparkled diadems of conquered nations dazzled the eyes of all beholders, and prevented the calmest observer from obtaining a clear and distinct view of the man to whose genius so many wonders are ascribed. But now the lustrous cloud has passed away; the sovereign has fallen from his throne; the victor's car is broken, and the conquered and discrowned, now appears before us divested of all the halo which pomp and power had cast around him; he now stands with unshadowed outline of character on his lonely rock of exile, as if placed upon a pedestal that shall present him in clearest light to the pencil of history. And how when taken will the portraiture appear? Before we examine this great historical picture, drawn by the most friendly hands, let us in few words describe the exile's situation at St Helena, and then inquire into the grievances under which it has so often been alleged that he suffered on that island.

In the house of Longwood, occupied by Napoleon and his household, the ex-Emperor had for his own personal accommodation a suite of rooms, consisting of a saloon, a dining-room, a library, a billiard-room, a small study,

a bed-room and a bath-room; and many English gentlemen, accustomed to all the appliances of modern luxury who visited the exile at St Helena, concur in stating that the arrangements appeared in every way complete and unobjectionable. His suite consisted of five gentlemen and two ladies; the superior French and Italian domestics about him were never fewer than eleven; and the sum allowed for his expenditure was L.12,000 per annum; the Governor having, besides, authority to draw upon the treasury for any larger sum in case he should consider this allowance insufficient. When we consider that wines and groceries, so heavily taxed in England, go duty-free to St Helena, is it not intolerable to be told that his munificent income—larger than that allowed to the governor of any English colony, the Governor-General of India excepted—was not amply sufficient for a person in Napoleon's situation?

One of the loudest complaints was about the deficiency and inferior quality of the wine: but on examination it appears that his ordinary beverage was Champagne and Burgundy; that his upper domestics were allowed each day, per man, a bottle of claret costing six pounds per dozen duty-free; and the lowest menial employed at Longwood, a bottle of good Teneriffe daily. And the Emperor's own table was always served in a style answerable to the dignity of a general officer in the British army. Endless vituperations were also repeated against the climate of St Helena; though it appears from tables kept and published by Dr Arnot, that the sick-list of a regiment stationed close to Longwood rarely contained more than one man out of forty, a clear proof of the salubrity of the air. It is besides well known, that out of all Napoleon's establishment, which, including English and Chinese domestics, amounted to

fifty persons, only one individual died during the five years of their stay at St Helena; and this man, an Italian Major-domo, had brought the seeds of consumption with him from Europe.

The regulations which, it is asserted, prevented the exile from taking the exercise necessary to his health, form another cause of complaint; but how stands the case? Wholly unobserved, his limits for riding or walking extended to four miles; partially observed, to eight; and overlooked, to twelve miles; and, accompanied by a British officer, he was at liberty to traverse the whole island. This attendance he objected to, though he had himself shown it to be necessary: for Sir George Cockburn had dispensed with it on a promise that he would hold no intercourse with the inhabitants, and he broke his promise on the first day that the indulgence was granted to him!

In order to prevent the exile from concerting with his friends in Europe any plan of escape, it was directed that his correspondence should pass through the hands of the Governor of the island, or the Secretary of State's office in England: a precaution which would not have been necessary had the British Government resorted to Napoleon's own plan of causing letters to be opened at the post-office by the agents of the police. Another measure necessary for securing a prisoner who was not under bolt and bar, and whose family had such vast sums at command, required that he should be seen once a day by the orderly-officer on duty at Longwood.

All these rules and restrictions gave not only offence, but called forth the most violent burst of choler. The villa of Longwood was certainly not comparable to the Tuileries, nor the establishment of an English general officer equal to that of the ruler of France. The re-

strictions imposed upon his rides and correspondence might be painful and mortifying to his feelings, but they were necessary to the safe custody of his person, and should, as they were imperative and could not be removed by the authorities on the island, have been submitted to with dignified composure. Protest and remonstrance were open to him; they might have proved of no avail, but would certainly have been far more consistent with high character and lofty bearing, than the "petty quarrels upon petty things" in which he constantly engaged with the Governor. Napoleon, so long a sovereign, who exacted the most implicit obedience from all his officers, should have known a soldier's duty better than to suppose that mere invectives could ever make a military man depart from the just line of conduct which his instructions imposed.

Let us now see what was the exile's ordinary course of life at Longwood: we copy from Mr Lockhart. "In ordinary times his course of life appears to have been as follows: He rose early, and as soon as he was out of bed either mounted on horseback, or began to dictate some part of the history of his life to Montholon or Gourgaud. He breakfasted *à la fourchette*, sometimes alone, sometimes with his suite, between ten and eleven o'clock: read or dictated until between two and three, when he received such visitors as he chose to admit. He then rode out, either on horseback or in his carriage, for a couple of hours, attended generally by all his suite; then read or dictated again until near eight, at which hour dinner was served. He preferred plain food, and ate plentifully. A few glasses of claret, less than an English pint, were taken during dinner; and a cup of coffee concluded the second and last meal of the day as the first. A single glass of Champagne, or any stronger

wine, was sufficient to call the blood into his cheek. His constitutional delicacy of stomach, indeed, is said to have been such, that it was at all times actually impossible for him to indulge any of the coarser appetites of our nature to excess. He took, however, great quantities of snuff. A game at chess, a French tragedy read aloud, or conversation, closed the evening. The habits of his life had taught him to need but little sleep, and to take this by starts; and he generally had some one to read to him after he went to bed at night, as is common with those whose pillows are pressed by anxious heads.

"Napoleon was elaborately careful of his person. He loved the bath, and took it at least once every day. His dress at St Helena was generally the same which he had worn at the Tuileries as Emperor, viz., the green uniform faced with red of the chasseurs of the Guard, with the star and order of the Legion of Honour. His suite to the last continued to maintain around him, as far as was possible, the style and circumstance of his court."

This life was no doubt monotonous and uninteresting to one who had swayed the destinies of Europe: it might be detrimental to health, and might ultimately, perhaps, shorten the life of one whose very existence required constant excitement, and who had neither mental composure nor elevation of sentiment to support him in adversity; but it was assuredly the most lenient species of captivity ever experienced by a prisoner whose safe custody was of such vast importance, and who had no claim to the liberal treatment he experienced, beyond what he derived from the generosity of the nation to whom he surrendered himself. It was due to the fame of England that Napoleon should be treated with every indulgence consistent with the precautions

necessary to prevent his escape; and we see no reason to doubt that he did experience such treatment. Even Las Cases admits that Napoleon expressed his satisfaction at being under the protection of the laws of England, which afforded him security against the arbitrary measures, and dangerous *political maladies* to which he might have been exposed under the Continental governments. It is highly unjust to suppose that any European government could have been guilty of the crime thus hinted at; but it is equally certain that the captive could nowhere have enjoyed the liberal treatment he experienced from the British. In Austria, Prussia, or Russia, he would have been immured within the walls of a citadel, detained under bolts and bars; and instead of having miles of free range, for rides, drives, and exercise,—been allowed to take his daily walk round the ramparts of the fortress, attended by the officer of his guard; and would most assuredly have had no opportunity of circulating low and vulgar invectives against the commander of the garrison or the rulers of the country in which he might have been confined.

The first demand addressed to La Fayette and the French deputies sent to solicit peace from the Allied Sovereigns after the battle of Waterloo, was the surrender of Napoleon: a proof that they intended, if possible, to secure his person, and detain him in safe custody. And how could this be effected on the Continent unless by confining him in prison?

Without inquiring here whether a dungeon would not have been the mildest fate Napoleon could have expected, had he been tried by the rule of his own conduct, let us simply ask, what were the grounds that gave him such especial claims to the sympathies of the world, or entitled him to a liberality of treatment supe-

rior to what he experienced? Was the liberality displayed towards the garrison of Acre, butchered in cold blood two days after they had surrendered their arms, to be pleaded in his cause; or was the sympathy evinced towards the descendant of a long line of princes and heroes, when the Duke of Enghein was forcibly carried away from a neutral territory and shot in the moat of Vincennes, to be advanced in his favour? Under what obligation was England to the unprincipled ruler who had caused the ruin of so many of her citizens, by detaining in captivity peaceful individuals travelling or residing in France, on the full security of the usages practised by civilized nations? Was the infamous and vindictive conduct pursued towards Toussaint, sent to perish in a dungeon amidst the snows of the Pyrenees, or the unparalleled treachery practised on the Spanish Princes, to recommend Napoleon to universal commiseration? Was the assassination of Palm, the murder of Hoffer, or the slaughter of the brave and patriotic followers of Schill, to move the sympathies of the world in favour of their ruthless executioner? Sympathy for the sufferings of the unfortunate,—the sorrow that presses round the heart of kindness when grieving over fallen worth or ruined greatness,—is one of the noblest gems in the crown of humanity, a bright and rare link in the chain that binds our selfish species to the higher order of beings with which we claim alliance, and must ever be cherished and revered while virtue is honoured upon earth; but the morbid feeling which blinds to the deformity of crime, and strives to show leniency to the criminal at the risk of the peaceful and the unoffending, is not a virtue, it is a moral disease, a sickly and overstrained sentimentality, resulting from mental and nervous weakness, and completely at vari-

ance with honest, upright, and manly generosity. And it was in a great measure this worthless feeling which aided party zeal in pleading the cause of Napoleon at St Helena.

Having thus seen how the ex-Emperor was situated in his exile, let us return to the more direct thread of our long varied and blood-stained narrative, now drawing rapidly to a close; for the events of single days recorded in this Memoir have often filled more pages than years of monotonous captivity can possibly occupy.

By a convention signed at Paris on the 20th August 1815, it was decided, that to prevent him from again disturbing the peace of the world, Napoleon Bonaparte should be considered the prisoner of England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia. The custody of his person was to be intrusted to England, and the Allied Powers, including France, were invited to send Commissioners to St Helena, to satisfy their respective Courts that he was actually present. Napoleon being thus the prisoner of the Continental Sovereigns as well as of England, it became their duty to watch over his comfort and well-being; an easy task, as they were necessarily informed by means of the resident Commissioners of the manner in which he was treated. And yet is there not a single protest or complaint by any one of the sovereigns against the conduct pursued towards the captive, who at different times had been the ally of all, and was still the son-in-law of a powerful Emperor: from none was the slightest objection to the treatment experienced by Napoleon ever heard.

Some months after the signature of this convention, Sir Hudson Lowe was nominated Governor of St Helena. This officer, on whom Napoleon and his partisans seem to have exhausted all their powers of vituperation, had

commanded a foreign regiment in the Mediterranean, and was well acquainted with the French and Italian languages; an advantage that in some measure tended, perhaps, to obtain for him the appointment in question. During the campaigns of 1813 and 1814, he was attached to the head-quarters of Field-Marshal Blücher; and the despatches he sent home to Government showed him to possess both spirit and ability, even as the decorations and marks of esteem he had received from the Allied monarchs, proved that his manner and bearing were of a nature to make a favourable impression on princes and men of high rank and station. After the first peace of Paris, he became Quartermaster-General to the forces stationed in Belgium, and on the landing of Napoleon, arranged with the Prussian General Kleist, the operations to be adopted by the Allied armies, in case the French should, as was then expected, invade the Netherlands. Before the breaking out of hostilities, Sir Hudson was sent to command the British troops at Genoa, where he had scarcely arrived when the violent reaction against the Bonapartists, which took place in the south of France after the fall of the Emperor, induced him to embark his forces and take military possession of Marseilles: a measure of vigour and energy which preserved the peace of the whole of that interesting province, and obtained for him the gratitude of the inhabitants, and the approbation of his own government. He was hardly relieved from this duty before he was ordered to St Helena.

It is admitted even by Napoleon, that Sir Hudson endeavoured on his first arrival to place the intercourse between himself and the exile on a footing as gracious as could well be looked for under all the circumstances of the case. But these efforts were vain; and the Gover-

nor had not been a week on the island before the ex-Emperor condescended, says Mr Lockhart, "to insult him to his face, by language so extravagantly, intolerably, and vulgarly offensive, as never ought, under any circumstances whatever, to have stained the lips of one who made any pretensions to the character of a gentleman."

We give the origin of these dissensions, principally on Napoleon's own authority. The Governor's first aggression—so represented—was his requiring permission of *General Bonaparte* to call together his domestics, with a view to their taking the declaration required by the British Government, binding themselves to abide by the rules laid down for the custody of Bonaparte's person. This permission was refused in very haughty terms. If Napoleon had been at the Tuileries, such a request could not have been more highly resented. The servants, however, appeared and took the necessary declaration; but the affront was not cancelled.

Upon the 30th July, the Governor again paid his respects at Longwood, and was received with one of those calculated bursts of furious passion with which Napoleon was wont to try the courage and shake the nerves of those over whom he desired to acquire influence. He spoke of protesting against the convention of Paris, and demanded what right the Sovereigns therein allied had to dispose of their equal always, and often their superior? He called upon the Governor for death or liberty, as if it had been in Sir Hudson Lowe's power to give him either the one or the other. Sir Hudson enlarged on the conveniences of the building which was to be sent from England to supply the present want of accommodation. Bonaparte repelled the proposed consolation with fury. It was not a house that he wanted,

it was an executioner and a line. These he would esteem a favour, all the rest was but irony and insult. Sir Hudson Lowe could, in reply, only hope that he had given no personal offence; and was reminded of his review of the domestics, which reproach he listened to in silence.

Presently afterwards, Napoleon fell on a new method of exercising Sir Hudson's patience. A book on the campaign of 1814 lay on the table. Napoleon turned up some of the bulletins, and asked with a tone which was perfectly intelligible, whether the Governor had not been the writer of these letters. Being answered in the affirmative, Napoleon, according to Dr O'Meara, told Sir Hudson they were full of folly and falsehood; to which the Governor, with more patience than most men could have commanded on such an occasion, replied, "I believe I saw what I have stated:" an answer certainly as temperate as could be returned to so gratuitous an insult. After Sir Hudson had left the room in which he had been received with so much unprovoked rudeness, Napoleon is described as having harangued upon the sinister expression of his countenance, abused him in the coarsest manner, and even caused his valet-de-chambre to throw a cup of coffee out of the window because it had stood a moment on the table beside the Governor.

This was certainly an indifferent commencement; and on the 18th August a decisive quarrel already took place between them. Sir Hudson Lowe was admitted to an audience, at which was present Sir Pulteney Malcolm, the Admiral who now commanded on the station. Dr O'Meara has preserved the following account of the interview, as it was detailed by Napoleon to his suite the day after it happened:—

"That Governor," he said, "came here to annoy me. He saw me walking in the garden, and in consequence I could not refuse to receive him. He wanted to enter into some details with me about reducing the expenses of the establishment. He had the audacity to tell me that things were as he found them, and that he came up to justify himself; that he had come up two or three times before to do so, but that I was in a bath. I replied, 'No, Sir, I was not in a bath; but I ordered one on purpose not to see you. In endeavouring to justify yourself you make matters worse.' He said that I did not know him; that if I knew him I should change my opinion. 'Know you, Sir!' I answered; 'how could I know you? People make themselves known by their actions—by commanding in battles. You have never commanded in battle. You have never commanded any but Corsican deserters, Piedmontese and Neapolitan brigands. I know the name of every English General who has distinguished himself; but I never heard of you except as a *scrivano* * to Blücher, or as a commandant of brigands. You have never commanded, or been accustomed to men of honour.' He said that he had not sought for his present situation. I told him that such employments were not asked for; that they were given by governments to people who had dishonoured themselves. He said that he only did his duty, and that I ought not to blame him, as he only acted according to his orders. I replied, 'So does the hangman; he acts according to his orders: but when he puts a rope about my neck to finish me, is that a reason that I should like that hangman because he acts according to his orders? Besides, I do not believe that any government could be so mean as to give such orders as you cause to be executed. I told him that if he pleased, he

* Clerk.

need not send up anything to eat; that I could go over and dine at the table of the brave officers of the 53d; that I was sure there was not one of them who would not be happy to give a plate at the table to an old soldier; that there was not a soldier in the regiment who had not more heart than he had; that in the iniquitous bill of Parliament they had decreed that I was to be treated as a prisoner, but that he had treated me worse than a condemned criminal or a galley-slave, as they were permitted to receive newspapers and printed books, of which he deprived me.'—'You have power,' I said, 'over my body, but none over my soul. That soul is as proud, fierce, and determined at the present moment as when it commanded Europe.' I told him that he was a *sbirro Siciliano*,—Sicilian thief-taker,—and not an Englishman, and desired him not to let me see him again until he came with orders to dispatch me, when he would find all the doors thrown open to admit him."

It is not surprising that this extreme violence met with some return on Sir Hudson's part. He told Napoleon that his language was uncivil and ungentlemanlike, and that he would not remain to listen to it. Accordingly he left Longwood without even the usual salutation.

Let us now relate the last meeting between the parties, on the authority of Sir Hudson Lowe himself:—

"It becoming necessary to come to some decision in respect to the house and furniture which had been sent from England for the accommodation of General Bonaparte and his followers, I resolved upon waiting upon him, communicating to him the arrival of the various materials, and asking his sentiments with respect to their appropriation, before I made any disposition of

them. I previously called on General Bertrand, to ask if he thought General Bonaparte would be at leisure to see me; and on his reply, which was in the affirmative, I proceeded to Longwood-House, where having met Count Las Cases, I begged he would be the bearer of my message to the General, acquainting him with my being there, if his convenience admitted of being visited by me. I received a reply saying, 'the Emperor would see me.'

"I passed through his outer dining-room into his drawing-room. He was alone, standing with his hat under his arm, in the manner in which he usually presents himself when he assumes his Imperial dignity. He remained silent, expecting I would address him. Finding him not disposed to commence, I began in the following words:—'Sir, you will probably have seen by our English newspapers, as well, perhaps, as heard through other channels, of the intention of the British Government to send out hither for your accommodation the materials for the construction of a house, with every necessary furniture. These articles have now for the first time arrived. In the meantime, Government has received information of the building prepared for your reception at this place; and I have instructions for appropriating the articles as may seem best, whether for making a new building, or adding to the conveniences of your present one. Before making any disposition on the subject, I waited to know whether you had any desires to communicate to me regarding it.' He stood as before and made no reply.

"Observing his silence continue, I again commenced by saying, 'I have conceived, Sir, that possibly the addition of two or three good rooms—*deux ou trois salons*—to your present house, with other improvements to it,

might add to your convenience in less time than by constructing a new building.' He then commenced, but spoke with such rapidity, such intemperance, and so much warmth, that it is difficult to repeat every word he used. Without apparently having lent an ear to what I said, he began—'I do not at all understand the conduct of your Government towards me. Do they desire to kill me? And do you come here to be my executioner, as well as my gaoler? Posterity will judge of the manner in which I have been treated. The misfortunes which I suffer will recoil upon your nation. No, Sir, never will I suffer any person to enter into the interior of my house, or penetrate into my bed-chamber as you have given orders. When I heard of your arrival in this island, I believed that, as being an officer in the army, you would be possessed of a more polite character than the Admiral, who is a navy officer, and might have more harsh manners. I have no reason to complain of his heart. But you, Sir, in what manner do you treat me? It is an insult to invite me to dinner by the name of General Bonaparte. I am not General Bonaparte—I am the Emperor Napoleon. I ask you again, have you come hither to be my gaoler—my hangman?' Whilst speaking in this manner, his right arm moved backwards and forwards; his person stood fixed; his eyes and countenance exhibiting every thing which could be supposed in a person who meant to intimidate or irritate.

"I suffered him to proceed throughout, not without a strong feeling of restraint on myself, until he was really out of breath, when, on his stopping, I said, 'Sir, I am not come here to be insulted, but to treat of an affair which regards you more than me. If you are not disposed to talk on the subject—'

"'I have no intention to insult you, Sir,' he replied; 'but in what sort of manner have you treated me? is it in a soldierlike fashion?'

"I answered, 'Sir, I am a soldier according to the fashion of my own country, to do my duty to her accordingly, and not according to the fashion of foreigners. Besides, if you conceive you have any reason to complain of me, you have only to put your accusation upon paper, and I will send it to England by the first opportunity.'

"'To what good purpose?' he said: 'my complaints will not be more public there than here.'

"'I will cause them to be published,' I answered, 'in all the Gazettes of the Continent if you desire it. I do my duty, and everything else is indifferent to me.'

"Then adverting for the first time to the matter which had brought me to him, he said, 'Your Government has made me no official communication of the arrival of this house. Is it to be constructed where I please, or where you may fix it to be?'

"'I am now come, Sir, for the express purpose of announcing it to you. I have no difficulty in replying to the other point; if there is any particular spot which you might have thought of to erect it upon, I will examine it, and have it erected there, if I see no objection to it. If I see any objection to it, I will acquaint you with it. It was to combine this matter in some degree of concert with you that I am now come.'

"'Then you had better speak to the Grand Maréchal about it, and settle it with him.'

"'I prefer, Sir, addressing you upon it. I find so many *mesintelligences* happen when I adopt the medium of other persons, particularly as in the instance of the orders which you mention I had given for forcing an

entrance into your private apartments, that I find it more satisfactory to address yourself.' He made no particular reply to this, walked about for a moment, and then working himself up apparently to say something which he thought would appal me with extraordinary surprise or dread, he said,—'Do you wish me, Sir, to tell you the truth? Yes, Sir, I ask you if you desire me to tell you the truth? I believe that you have received orders to kill me—yes, to kill me—yes, Sir, I believe that you have received orders to stick at nothing—nothing.' He then looked at me as if expecting a reply. My answer was, 'You were pleased to remark, Sir, in our last interview, that you had miscalculated the spirit of the English people. Give me leave to say, you at present calculate as erroneously the spirit of an English officer.'

"Our interview here terminated, and as if neither of us had any thing more to say, we mutually separated."

The forbearance displayed by Sir Hudson Lowe during this strange and violent scene met with the full approbation of Government; and as the following extract from the official despatch shows the consideration entertained for Napoleon's situation, we here give it at length:—"It would be a want of generosity not to make great allowance for the intemperate language into which he, Napoleon, may at times be betrayed. The height from whence he has been precipitated, and all the circumstances which have attended his fall, are sufficient to overset a mind less irritable than his; and it is to be apprehended that he can find little consolation in his reflections, either in the means by which he obtained his power, or his manner of exercising it. So long, therefore, as his violence is confined to words, it must be borne with; always understanding, that any wilful

transgression on his part, of the rules which you may think it necessary to prescribe for the security of his person, will place you under the necessity of adopting a system of restraint which it will be most painful to you to inflict."

Making, as we are bound to do, every allowance for Napoleon's fall from empire to captivity; admitting the justness of his own statement, that fortune had spoiled him by giving him the command of armies and the dictatorship of nations before he was thirty years of age, we are still unable to reconcile the conduct here displayed with anything like mental dignity, self-respect, or with that insight into character inseparable from talent the moment it rises above the most ordinary mediocrity. To prevent misapprehension, we should perhaps say that we speak of legislative and military talents —the talents of soldiers and statesmen evinced in the government of empires and the command of armies. To us, Napoleon's conduct during these interviews with Sir Hudson Lowe seem only poor attempts to impose upon a man of the world, holding an important official situation, by a very unworthy style of acting, in which he had completely miscalculated his own power and the character of his auditor. An officer of Sir Hudson's rank and experience was surely not to be brow-beaten by a foolish assumption of theatrical grandeur, contrasting so unfortunately with the language of the actor. Sir Hudson could not alter the resolution of the English Government towards the exile; he was totally defenceless against the vulgar abuse heaped upon him, which could therefore spring only from a vulgar mind, and necessarily recoiled upon the very person by whom it was employed.

To the very last, Napoleon used his utmost efforts to

irritate the Governor, and even instigated the officers of his suite to follow this unworthy example; a system of behaviour on which Mr Ellis, who visited St Helena on his return from China, makes the following observation:—"I can only account for his petulance and unfounded complaints from one of two motives,—either he wishes by these means to keep alive an interest in Europe, and more especially in England, where he flatters himself he has a party; or, his troubled mind finds an occupation in the annoyance which his present conduct gives to the Governor. If the latter be the case, it is in vain for any Governor to unite being on good terms with him with the performance of his duty."

It is probable indeed that both these motives influenced the conduct of the exile, though his principal object was no doubt to keep interest alive in his favour; and to effect this, books and pamphlets, written mostly at St Helena, and in a great part by the Emperor himself, and containing the most extravagant misrepresentations, were circulated all over Europe. In every country the wrongs of Napoleon, the cruelty of the English Government, above all, the petty tyranny of Sir Hudson Lowe, became the ordinary topics of conversation. In Parliament, the treatment of the ex-Emperor was often made a subject of complaint against the Government; and if the answers given by ministers silenced accusation for a time, it was only till fresh misrepresentations could arrive from Longwood, when they were again renewed with augmented bitterness; not only by the political adversaries of the ministry, but by all the Continental enemies of England.

The total impossibility of effecting an escape from St Helena, was generally alleged as a sufficient proof of the justice of these complaints: though it is well known

that the French party at Longwood entertained a very different opinion on the subject; and General Gourgaud told Baron Sturmer the Austrian Commissioner, who repeated it in his report to Prince Metternich, "That there was nothing impossible for those who had millions at command, and that the Emperor could escape to America whenever he thought proper."—"Why then does he remain here?" was the Baron's natural question; to which the other replied, "That his followers had often urged him to attempt an escape; but that a secret pride, and the interest taken in his fate, induced him to remain on the island."—"I can no longer live as a private individual," were his words, according to Gourgaud; "and would rather be a prisoner on this rock than a free and undistinguished individual in the United States." It is probable, however, that the French party exaggerated the facility of an escape, and that Napoleon would not expose himself to the perils of such an adventure; as he fully expected that the first change of Ministers in England would restore him to liberty.

Whatever may have been his thoughts on this subject, it is now certain that schemes for effecting his liberation were constantly in agitation both in England and America; and Johnston a smuggler, well known for his daring and enterprise, was actually engaged in building a vessel for the purpose, when on information given, the half-finished ship was seized by order of Government. Reports of these schemes sent to Sir Hudson Lowe necessarily prevented him from giving the captive any additional indulgence; while the duplicity practised upon him tended also to keep suspicion constantly awake, and proved highly injurious to the cause of the exile.

Dr O'Meara and Count Las Cases, detected in corresponding with Napoleon's agents contrary to the

orders of the Governor, and to the engagements they had entered into, were dismissed from the island; and at the very time when the ex-Emperor himself, as if in absolute want, caused some plate to be broken and publicly sold at Jamestown, it was ascertained from Gourgaud that he had ten thousand pounds of ready money in his coffers at Longwood!

These vexatious circumstances were hardly known in Europe till after the publication of Sir Walter Scott's history; but the measures of precaution which they rendered necessary spread far and wide, and kept alive that agitation in favour of Napoleon, under the impression of which Lord Byron, forgetting perhaps some of the stanzas of his beautiful ode, apostrophised him in the following lines:—

"Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou!
She trembles at thee still—and thy wild name
Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds than now
That thou art nothing, save the jest of Fame,
Who woo'd thee once, thy vassal, and became
The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou wert
A god unto thyself—nor less the same
To the astounded kingdoms all inert,
Who deemed thee for a time whate'er thou didst assert."

The ordinary politeness natural to a man of the world, with which he received the officers and persons of rank who, when touching at St Helena, requested permission to pay their respects at Longwood, also made a general impression in his favour. Among these visiters was Captain Basil Hall of the navy, whose name will be well known to most readers, and who gives the following sketch of the exile:—"Bonaparte," says this traveller, "struck me"—August 13, 1817—"as differing consider-

ably from all the pictures and busts I had seen of him. His face and figure looked much broader and more square; larger, indeed, in every way than any representation I had met with. His corpulency, at this time reported to be excessive, was by no means remarkable. His flesh looked, on the contrary, firm and muscular. There was not the least trace of colour in his cheeks; in fact, his skin was more like marble than ordinary flesh. Not the smallest wrinkle was discernible on his brow, nor an approach to a furrow on any part of his countenance. His health and spirits, judging from appearances, were excellent; though at this period it was generally believed in England that he was fast sinking under a complication of diseases, and that his spirits were entirely gone. His manner of speaking was rather slow than otherwise, and perfectly distinct; and he waited with great patience and kindness for my answers to his questions. The brilliant and sometimes dazzling expression of his eye could not be overlooked. It was not however a permanent lustre, for it was only remarkable when he was excited by some point of particular interest. It is impossible to imagine an expression of more entire mildness, I may almost call it of benignity and kindliness, than that which played over his features during the whole interview. If, therefore, he was at this time out of health and in low spirits, his power of self-command must have been even more extraordinary than is generally supposed; for his whole deportment, his conversation, and the expression of his face, indicated a frame in perfect health, and a mind at ease."

Another visiter, the shrewd and pleasant author of the "Trifles from a Portfolio," speaks less favourably of the exile, and more in accordance with the description of a still abler hand which we shall yet have to quote:—"On

the afternoon of the 1st of September 1817," says Dr Henry, "the officers of our regiment, with Sir George Bingham and Colonel Nicol at their head, repaired to Longwood. We called at Marshal Bertrand's house, fifty or sixty yards from the residence of Napoleon, to pick up the Marshal, who accompanied us to the billiard-room, where we found Counts Montholon and Gourgaud. After waiting five or six minutes, the folding-doors of the anti-chamber were thrown open; we entered, formed a ring round the room according to seniority, and in about a minute Napoleon walked into the circle. He was dressed in a plain dark-green uniform-coat without epaulettes or anything equivalent, but with a large star on the breast, which had an eagle in the centre. The buttons were gold, with the device of a mounted dragoon in high relief. He had on white breeches with silk stockings, and oval gold buckles in his shoes, with a small opera-hat under his arm. Napoleon's first appearance was far from imposing: his stature was short and thick; head sunk into his shoulders; his face fat, with large folds under the chin; the limbs appeared to be stout, but well proportioned; complexion olive; expression sinister and rather scowling. The features instantly reminded us of the prints of him we had seen. On the whole, his general look was more that of an obese Spanish or Portuguese friar than the hero of modern times. Bonaparte walked round the room with an attempt (as it seemed) at the old dignity, and addressed a few words to most of the officers. Colonel Nicol was first introduced by Sir George Bingham, he and Marshal Bertrand acting as interpreters." Passing over the questions addressed to various officers, and which have no particular interest here, the writer thus closes his account of the interview:—"A few sentences were then

exchanged between Napoleon, Marshal Bertrand, and Sir George Bingham; and we all bowed and retired.

"As we walked home to Deadwood, and calmly reviewed what had passed, and compared the appearance, manner, and conversation of Bonaparte with our preconceived ideas, prepossessions and expectations, the general feeling and result was disappointment; but this might have been reasonably anticipated. Without reference to the usual sobering effect of vicinity and contact in dissipating the gilded halos with which a sanguine fancy invests distant and remarkable objects, the interview with Napoleon had dissolved a glory *par excellence*. A fascinating prestige which we had cherished all our lives then vanished like gossamer in the sun. The great Emperor Napoleon, the hero of modern times, had merged in an unsightly and obese individual; and we looked in vain for that overwhelming power of eye and force of expression which we had been taught to expect by a delusive imagination.

"At our mess-dinner the same evening, our illustrious neighbour had evidently fallen off by one-half from our notions concerning him of the day before. Of course, our conversation was exclusively occupied by the great event of the day, which would form a sort of epoch in our lives. Various and amusing enough was the confidential chat over our wine that evening. Some were much dissatisfied at the answers they had given, and wished the interview could be reacted, that they might behave better. One or two honest fellows acknowledged a loss of all presence of mind on the occasion. We had some mirth at poor L'Estrange's expense, about the 'drink—drink,' and the fuddling propensity of which he was so unceremoniously accused by Bonaparte; though the charge was quite unfounded. Besides, we were puzzled

to understand by what peculiar mode of reasoning the Emperor had established the whimsical connection between intemperance of this sort and a dark complexion; and more particularly as the induction would bear hard against himself."

In March 1817, Lord Holland brought the subject of Napoleon's treatment before the House of Peers; but was so ably answered by Lord Bathurst that no one was found to second his motion. And the failure of this friendly effort in his favour made a deep and painful impression on the spirits of the captive, and already contributed perhaps to undermine his health. His refusal also to take regular exercise could not fail to prove injurious to his constitution; and it was in vain that in the autumn of 1818, Dr O'Meara warned him of the consequences which might ensue. Napoleon declared that he would never more take exercise while exposed to the challenge of English sentinels, though in fact no such exposure was necessary. And when the physician explained that such a resolution might lead to a fatal termination, the captive gave the following answer:— "I shall at least have the consolation," he said, "to know that my death will be an eternal disgrace to the English nation who sent me to this climate to die under the hands of ———." When the Doctor again urged the point, "That which is written is written," he said, looking up: "our days are numbered."

The ex-Emperor refusing to receive any English medical officer after O'Meara's departure, an Italian physician of the name of Antommarchi was sent out by his sister Pauline. With this gentleman came two Italian priests whom Napoleon had solicited, and who were selected by Cardinal Fesch. Their presence augmented the society of Longwood, where mass was occasionally performed.

But the patient followed the advice of the Italian physician as little as he had followed that of the English one, and constantly refused to take the necessary exercise. Whether this arose from the languor of declining strength, or from any fixed and more unworthy purpose, it were now in vain to inquire. He also objected to take medicine; and on one occasion, it was on the 14th October 1820, thus replied to Antommarchi's recommendation:—"No physic, doctor; we are, as I have already told you, a machine made to live: we are organized for that purpose, and such is our nature: do not counteract the living principle; let it alone; leave it the liberty of self-defence; it will do better than your drugs. Our body is a watch intended to go for a given time. The watchmaker cannot open it, and must work at random; and for once that he relieves or assists it with his crooked instruments, he injures it ten times, and at last destroys it altogether."

As the captive's hopes sank his strength declined; his spirits gave way, and he became more and more depressed. He had taken some interest and amusement in the construction of a pond and fountain in the garden of Longwood. It was stocked with small fish; but a mixture of copperas employed to cement the basin affected the water, and the creatures which had been the object of his attention sickened and died. He was, we are told, affected by the circumstance; and in language, often heard from those whose fortunes have sunk in life, expressed his sense of the fatality which seemed to press upon him. "Every thing I love,—every thing that belongs to me," he exclaimed, "is immediately struck. Heaven and mankind unite to afflict me."

At other times he lamented, as we are told, the decay of his energies. The bed, he said, was now a place of

luxury which he would not exchange for all the thrones in the world. He asserted that he used to dictate to four secretaries at the same time, of which we find, however, no record in any part of his history; "but then," he said, "I was Napoleon,—now I am no longer anything: my strength, my faculties forsake me,—I no longer live, I only exist." He often remained silent and immersed in profound melancholy for hours together.

On the 22d January 1821, he made an attempt to conquer his disease by exercise, and mounted his horse for the last time. He galloped five or six miles round the limits of Longwood; but nature was overcome by the effort, and he complained that his strength was rapidly sinking under him.

Reports of Napoleon's illness had for some time been circulated at St Helena, and these Sir Hudson Lowe reported to Government, without, however, having it in his power to ascertain whether they were entitled to credit: for the patient would neither receive an English physician, nor allow Dr Antommarchi to communicate with the Governor. The answer of Lord Bathurst, dated 16th February 1821, shows how anxious the British Government were to render the ex-Emperor's situation as agreeable as was consistent with his state of captivity.

"I am aware how difficult it is to make any communication to the General which will not be liable to misrepresentation; and yet if he be really ill, he may derive some consolation by knowing that the repeated accounts which have of late been transmitted of his declining health have not been received with indifference. You will therefore communicate to General Bonaparte the great interest which his Majesty has taken in the recent accounts of his indisposition, and the anxiety which his

Majesty feels to afford him every relief of which his situation admits. You will assure General Bonaparte that there is no alleviation which can be derived from additional medical assistance, nor any arrangement consistent with the safe custody of his person at St Helena, (and his Majesty cannot now hold out any expectation of his removal,) which his Majesty is not most ready and desirous to afford. You will not only repeat the offer which has already been more than once made, of such further medical assistance as the island of St Helena affords, but you will give him the option of procuring the attendance of any of the medical gentlemen who are at the Cape, where there is one at least of considerable eminence in his profession; and in case of any wish being expressed by the General to receive such assistance, you will consider yourself authorised to make a communication to the Cape, and to take such other measures as may be necessary to secure the immediate attendance of the person whom the General may name."

Unfortunately, however, this letter did not reach St Helena till after Napoleon's death, or it might have afforded him some consolation, and induced him to adopt a better and worthier line of conduct in his intercourse with the island authorities.

The remainder of our tale is soon told. Towards the end of February the disorder assumed so serious an appearance, that Dr Antommarchi became desirous of consulting with some of the English medical officers. But the patient would see no one sent by the Governor: "He only wants to deceive Europe by false bulletins," he said, recollecting his own practice; "I will see no one who is in communication with him." And it was not till the 1st of April, when the disease had taken

too firm a hold on the constitution to be eradicated, that Dr Arnot of the 20th Regiment was admitted to his presence. The patient complained principally of his stomach ; of a disposition to vomit, and deficiency of the digestive powers ; and the Doctor, who repeated his visits daily, came to the conclusion, which the result so fully justified, that it was a cancer in the stomach—a disease unconnected with the climate, and the same which had carried off his father in the pure air of Montpelier : and Napoleon, though he had concealed it from his own physician, avowed the same opinion. But he still refused to take medicine : " *Quod scriptum scriptum,*" were his words : " our span is marked, and no one can claim an hour of life beyond what fate has predestined."

From the 5th to the 25th, the exile was principally engaged in making his will ; and unequivocal and threatening symptoms of the dangerous disease having shown themselves, he directed that his body should be opened after death, and the result communicated to his son. " I believe," he said, " that I am attacked by the same disorder which killed my father—a schirrus in the pylorus ; the physicians of Montpelier prophesied that it would be hereditary in our family." The priest Vignali was instructed to lay out his body in a *chambre ardente,*—a state-room lighted with torches. " I am neither an atheist nor a rationalist," he said ; " I believe in God, and am of the religion of my fathers. I was born a Catholic, and will fulfil all the duties of that church, and receive all the assistance which she administers."

On the 3d of May it became evident that life was drawing to a close ; and at two o'clock Vignali administered the last sacraments of the church. The captive now only lingered on in delirious stupor, heedless even of a tremendous tempest that swept the island, tearing

up by their very roots the trees round Longwood. The war of elements continued on the 5th; but Napoleon marked it not; his flitting dreams were in the fields of other days: and having, at six in the evening, uttered the words *tête d'armée*, his spirit mingled with the storm, resigning to dust all that remained of the "man of thousand thrones."

The body was opened on the 6th by Dr Antommarchi. The French household were at first disposed to have the operation performed in secret; but Sir Hudson Lowe was too deeply impressed with his own and his country's responsibility to sanction such a proceeding; and declared that he would use force if necessary, to ensure the presence of English physicians. Five were in consequence admitted along with Counts Bertrand, Montholon, and some domestics of the establishment. The cause of death became apparent as soon as the body was opened; for it was found that a large cancer covered nearly the whole of the stomach. As the hospitals of the island had at no time produced a similar case, it was natural to conclude that the disease was not occasioned by the effects of climate.

Clad in the uniform of the *Chasseurs* of the Imperial Guard, the body was laid out in state, and visited by the whole population of the island; the soldiers of the garrison passed the bier slowly and in single file, each officer pausing in his turn to press that frozen hand which had once grasped so many sceptres.

In his will, Napoleon desired to be buried "on the banks of the Seine, among the French people whom he had loved so well." But as Louis XVIII. was not likely to grant this permission, a grave was prepared near a fountain beneath some weeping willows, in a romantic

spot called Slane's Valley. At evening the exile's favourite seat had been under the shade of these trees, and he had often declared that they should wave above his head if fate ordained him to be interred at St Helena. And so indeed it proved. On the 8th the Governor, the Admiral, and all the civil and military authorities of the island, attended him to the place of sepulture. The latter part of the road not being passable for carriages, a party of British Grenadiers bore Napoleon to the tomb. The Admiral's ship fired minute guns, while Vignali read the service of his church. The coffin was lowered into the vault amid discharges of artillery, and a nameless stone closed darkly on the grave of him who had sent myriads to dark and nameless graves.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL RECAPITULATION. THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH NAPOLEON ROSE TO POWER: HIS CONDUCT IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS, AND THE INFERENCES TO WHICH IT LEADS.

In striving to form an estimate of the talents and character of Napoleon Bonaparte, we must not allow ourselves to be dazzled by the height on which we find him placed when at the very summit of power; we must not receive his mere rise from the rank of Colonel to the throne of Empire, as constituting proofs of the many brilliant qualities usually ascribed to him; but must fairly examine the situation of France, and the extraordinary circumstances that led to his elevation. Nor can we measure the distance he had to traverse in his ascent to power, by the distance existing in settled governments between the commander of a regiment and the supreme and crowned ruler of the state; for there is not the slightest analogy between what Revolutionary France was when he appeared on the great stage of public life, and any other country or state of society, with which a comparison can be instituted.

In advancing to empire Napoleon followed a beaten track which many of his contemporaries—vastly his inferiors in position—had successfully traversed before him. The Revolution had levelled the ancient barriers

that generally interpose to prevent men of ordinary station from attaining supreme authority, and scattered to a distance all who in tranquil times surround thrones and the seats of power. The course was fully open ; and the tempest of revolution driving the disjointed particles of society along in its indiscriminate fury, while it hurled millions to destruction, sent others onward to wealth, rank, command, and titles. Cast upon the throne by the last effort of the sinking hurricane, Napoleon might in all probability have retained his seat with honour to himself and with benefit to the world, had not a total want of the very qualities for which it is usual to extol him, leagued indignant nations against his rule of tyranny and corruption.

The Reign of Terror found him a colonel of artillery, a high position in times of revolution, when painters, surgeons, and others, totally unconnected with the military profession, were appointed to the command of the very legions in which he was called upon to serve as a subordinate. Nor were the men at the head of the governments better than those who commanded the armies ; and Napoleon was by birth, station, and education, as much superior to the Marats, Dantons, and Robespierres, brought to the scaffold for their crimes, as he was to most of their successors in authority,—the Gohiers, Moulins, Siyès, and Roger-Ducos, who, owing to mere weakness, fell from the height of power into the very abyss of contempt and oblivion ; and

> "The rank and station such but hoped to gain,
> Could leave no room for others to be vain."

His advantages of education and position considered, Napoleon's first promotion seems to have been tardy ; nor

is there the least appearance to show that he was looked upon as an officer of any particular merit. At a time when almost every campaign brought with it a change of commanders, it was only the friendship, or protection rather, of Barras, and his marriage with Josephine Beauharnais, that obtained for him the command of the army of Italy, and placed him in the position whence his first rise must be dated.

If we have properly described the relative situation of the parties at the commencement of the Italian campaign, then every chance of success was in favour of the French. And we think it is already easy to discover in the conduct of the youthful commander, the elements of character which, formed and hardened by early and extraordinary success, distinguished the subsequent career of the Imperial conqueror.

From the first, we find him displaying the spirit of enterprise which belonged to the Republican Generals of the period, and which, when crowned with victory, called into active exertion the boundless vanity that so eminently marked Napoleon's conduct through life. It assisted his rise, and precipitated his fall: it gave him confidence which carried him far forward in his career, but overcame his moderate judgment, and led him into trials which he had neither the courage nor ability to overcome. His confidence rested on self-esteem, and wanted the firm foundation of high talents, courage, and energy, which can alone lead to real greatness. Such confidence swells the sail, indeed, while fortune guides the helm, but sinks to helpless feebleness the moment the blackening storm tells of close and menacing danger, and before even a single mast or spar has been shivered by the fury of the gale. In this manner we already find Napoleon bold in Italy, while

following success, and faint when closely-impending danger threatened: already feeble at Mondovi perhaps, he was certainly so at Castiglione; and such we find him on every occasion of imminent peril down even to the last day of his public life. Such he was in the Hall of the Five Hundred, and again on the explosion of the infernal machine: such he was in the fields of Marengo and Borodino; on the retreat from Moscow; on the Eagle's nest in Saxony; at Düben, Leipzig, Fontainbleau, and on the road to Elba. We find him the same at Smolensk, when listening with ignoble stupor to the incessant rolls of artillery that pealed the knell of thousands on the blood-steeped field of Valutino Gora; again when the hour of defeat sounded in thunder on the plains of Waterloo; and above all, when crouching at Paris before the miserable demagogues of his own contemptible Chambers.

And yet this is the man whom so many writers extol as endowed with the highest spirit, genius and perseverance! We should hardly acquit the humblest individual of craven fear, whose mind should thus sink and leave him helpless on the first close embrace of real danger: still less can we acquit the occupant of thrones, raised to Imperial sway by the blood of millions. Lofty stations call for lofty conduct; and the man who commanded armies, wielded the destiny of mighty empires, on whose stars, strength, and fame, thousands had staked life and fortune, stood pledged before the world to conduct corresponding to his high position. Failing to fulfil his pledge,—acting in the manner in which Napoleon acted on the occasions here cited,—he must stand condemned by history as totally destitute of mental courage, without having redeemed the deficiency by the display of a single proof of personal bravery. Where gallant armies, furnished and replenished by the con-

scription, were to be hurled forward to battle, then Napoleon was the bravest of the brave; where danger was to be grappled with in close and firm embrace, there he was as regularly wanting: often a daring commander, we never find him a daring soldier. It is true, that he seized a standard, and advanced at the head of the troops at Arcole; but Berthier, in his letter to Clerke, confesses that he turned at thirty yards from the enemy, because the troops refused to follow. That the Republican troops of the period should refuse to follow a commander-in-chief seems certainly strange, and rather at variance with their usual conduct; but certain it is, that he who seizes a standard to set an example, should not turn at what the Chief of the Staff terms thirty yards from the enemy. In such a case, the truly brave stakes his life upon the hazard of the die, while the mere boaster turns the moment danger meets him face to face.

The commander-in-chief of an army is not called upon to lead attacks, or to rush forward at the head of the troops into the very midst of the fire of musketry. Required to take, as much as possible, a view of the whole scene of battle, he must necessarily be in rear of the line engaged. But there may be occasions when even ordinary Generals are called upon to act a different part: and a revolutionary General, the founder of a dynasty, hurled at last from his throne by foreign armies, must have seen many occasions when gallant soldiership would have been skilful generalship. It is impossible to say when such occasions presented themselves; but that they often did so during the last campaigns need not be doubted: and the man who at Waterloo hurled his noble and devoted Guard into the very gulf of destruction long after the hour of defeat had sounded, was at least bound to fall or conquer at their head.

The callous and cold-hearted cruelty which distinguished Napoleon through his whole career, was already displayed in these early campaigns. And the frightful massacre of Pavia, the ruthless destruction of the peasantry in the insurgent districts, gave fearful evidence of what he was capable. The midnight executions of Cairo, the gigantic murder of Jaffa—a deed so foul and diabolical as to cast a stain upon human nature itself, by showing how far it can sink into crime, gave too fatal confirmation of these early symptoms. Nor could success soften a heart formed of the most worthless clay: for when already ascending the steps of his throne, his progress is marked by the murder of the Duke of Enghein and of Pichegru. The example of Augustus Cæsar did not influence Napoleon. Ruthless and unsparing in his progress to power, he remained so when absolute sway was attained; and as the victor of Austerlitz, the conqueror of nations, soiled his laurels and his diadem by the blood of an obscure and innocent bookseller, so did the victor of Wagram pollute the throne of Charlemagne, on which fortune had placed him, by the blood of the weak-minded enthusiast Staps, by the murder of the gallant Hoffer, and the execution of the brave and noble followers of Schill.

It is needless again to argue the question of the proposal to poison the sick at Jaffa; the assassin of 3000 Turkish prisoners was not likely to shrink from the murder of sixty or seventy Frenchmen. And the wounded but still living soldiers thrown into the Danube after the battle of Aspern, prove that Napoleon was ready to act on the principle which made him recommend the opium-potions in Syria. The sick, like the wounded, were sufferers in his cause, but that moved not his clay-cold heart; they were now in his way, and to

consign them to death was the speediest mode of relieving himself from the trouble their helplessness occasioned. It might have pleased Providence to spare some of these unhappy men, and restore them to health; but the iron hand of despotism was interposed, and instead of imploring Divine aid and protection for his maimed and suffering followers, he hastened their doom, and sent them to death before the higher will had proclaimed their fate.

Nor do these acts of individual barbarity alone tend to stamp the character of Napoleon with the callous cruelty with which it is charged. The demon deeds perpetrated by his armies in Spain, Portugal, the Tyrol and in Lithuania, must, in like manner, be charged against him. The French are not a cruel people; and though their national levity is easily excited to evil, as it was during the Revolution, it is more readily excited to good, and more susceptible of generous than of ungenerous feelings. An absolute and victorious ruler could easily have cultivated these better feelings, and sent forth his conquering bands, since war was his unhappy vocation, to become the admiration of Europe by their humane and generous conduct, as much as by their bravery; instead of entailing upon themselves and their country the abhorrence of whole nations by ruthless cruelty, as well as the scorn of all by avarice and rapacity.

If we already perceive marked traits of weak but hardened character displayed during Napoleon's Italian campaigns, we think we can also discover in his rapid success and the vanity which it fostered, the source of the grasping ambition and confusion of ideas which distinguished him as General, Consul, and Emperor. Grown to manhood amid the wildest scenes of the Revolution,

when the most extravagant and gigantic projects were constantly brought forward, and discussed in the inflated and bombastic style of the period; when classic times and classic writers were disfigured to furnish examples, and justify the conduct of modern Republicans; when Grecian heroism and Roman patriotism formed the theme of every harangue, the minds of the young could hardly fail to be inflated by the spirit of the age, and form vague and undefined notions of greatness, which knowledge and judgment could alone correct.

But Napoleon had far more vanity than judgment; and his early and extraordinary success, acting on this vanity, aggravated the effects of his Republican education, and tended naturally to throw a mind of very ordinary compass beyond its power and reach. And hence the grasping ambition that no extent of dominion could satisfy, and the confusion of ideas that led to the fall of his lofty and baseless structures. This was fully displayed in the endless schemes formed during the Italian campaigns, when every day saw some new plan proposed only to be abandoned on the following; the plunder and oppression of the weaker States forming the leading features, and the only discoverable merit of all these heroic projects. Here also the expedition to Egypt was first concocted, and evidently founded on some vague notion of eastern dominion, or on the possibility of invading British India: expectations that a very moderate share of knowledge and judgment must have shown could never be realized.

The expedition into Syria is another illustration of the same deficiency; for if captured, the fortress of Acre, separated by wide deserts from the Egyptian frontier, could never have been maintained had it even possessed the slightest intrinsic value. The pretended plan of

revolutionizing "the boundless East," of assembling hostile Mahometan nations round the standards of a few feeble Christian or infidel battalions, that found not a single friend in the country from first to last, is a piece of mere idle bombast, which would not deserve a word of notice, if it did not tend to show how Napoleon strove to conceal faulty measures by representing them as the opening acts of magnificent projects which, if not thwarted by fate, frost, or the misconduct of inferiors, must have led to the most splendid results. It was thus when the ruin of his splendid army crowned the folly of the Russian expedition: extravagant plans were produced, and though seen at the first glance to be absolutely impracticable, would, we are told, have ensured ultimate victory, had not the Generals been found wanting in the energy required for carrying them into effect. The same device of baffled vanity was resorted to after the campaign of 1813, when the delay and indecision that hastened defeat were attempted to be palliated by the pretended projects of Düben, bearing falsehood and folly on their very front; but certain, we are told, of leading to the destruction of the Allies, had not the defection of Bavaria arrested the arm already raised to strike the decisive blow. In 1814 similar conduct was pursued; and the failure of the march in the rear of the Allied armies was cast, not upon the utter folly of the measure, but upon the unwillingness of the Marshals, who counteracted the splendid conception of the Emperor: though it is a well known fact that Napoleon never consulted his Generals, and always made them yield very prompt and implicit obedience to his orders.

This tendency to be carried away by vague and grasping ambition, to rush into enterprises without any clearly defined object beyond the gratification of personal vanity,

without the ability to calculate their difficulties, or the means required for bringing them to a successful termination, already displayed in the expedition to Egypt, was again rendered evident by the rupture of the Treaty of Amiens. In order to dispossess England of Malta, which he had not even the means to attack, he rushed into war with a nation placed completely beyond his reach, and engaged in a contest in which much was necessarily risked, in which every thing was ultimately lost, and in which nothing could be gained.

How rapidly men sink into error, how quickly one trifling false step unacknowledged and unretracted leads to ruin and dishonour, is already pointed out by Thucydides, and illustrated by every page of history, down to the very one of which we are here speaking. Napoleon was at war with England; and, unable to reach the power against which he had drawn the sword, instigated by petty feelings that prevented him from retracting the faulty step, he poured his wrath upon the feeble States of the Continent within his reach; occupied Naples and Hanover, oppressed Holland, Switzerland, and Italy, by numerous armies, and drained Spain of her treasures; not under any cause of complaint against those countries, but on the plea of coercing England!

If the monstrous doctrine, of unjustly oppressing the feeble for the purpose of forcing the strong to make generous sacrifices, detrimental to their own national interest, in order to purchase relief for the weak and defenceless, was ever before acted upon, it never at least found open defenders, and still less was it lauded as an allowable principle of hostility. This task was left for the advocates of Napoleon, who not only justified every fresh aggression on the Continental States, as a fair measure of attack on England; but actually ended by setting up the principle

that all resistance to the will of the Emperor was a crime which they were entitled to denounce as perfidious, as purchased by British gold, and liable to punishment accordingly. This doctrine, though never perhaps asserted in the plain terms here written down, was maintained in a thousand volumes, and with a degree of boldness and assurance that could hardly fail, where no contradiction was tolerated, to make some impression on the unreflecting mass. It soon produced its natural fruit; and the monstrous theory which proclaimed that the will, or "system of the Emperor," as it was termed, sanctioned every act of aggression, and justified the scorn with which every known principle of political morality was treated, spread rapidly from those who wielded power to those who executed its decrees; and struck not only at political but at private morality also, and was soon made to justify the manner in which the Imperial will and system were carried into effect. A scornful disregard of all moral obligations and duties was thus widely diffused; plunder, rapine, and oppression, were the natural consequences; and the complaints, sorrows, and sufferings of the citizens of conquered and occupied countries, were treated as matters not deserving the slightest notice when placed in opposition to the "system of the Emperor."

Once admitted as a principle of action, this system led rapidly from one deed of aggression to another. Victory crowned the arms of France as if permanently attached to her standards; but it is not easy, amid this blaze of conquest, to discover the slightest appearance of policy, of any ability displayed to secure the advantages gained, and reap permanent and honourable benefit from the success achieved. On the contrary, we find only the seeds of hatred sown at every step. Aus-

tria and Prussia, never equal to France in power, are forced into war ; and being vanquished in the field, are so fearfully oppressed during the French occupation, so dreadfully humbled and reduced by the terms imposed upon them, that the frank and open hostility of the battle-field is hardened into the fixed and deadly hatred that "parts not but with parting breath." If policy required that the vanquished should be weakened, it also required that national pride, dignity, and feeling, should be spared ; the terrible reaction of 1813 proved that brave nations, though fated to see their armies defeated, their fortresses reduced, cannot long be insulted and trampled upon with impunity.

Nor were those alone oppressed who resorted to arms. Sovereigns who had observed the most perfect neutrality were deposed; provinces and principalities were severed from empires of which they formed part, to which they were allied by blood, attachment and common interest, to be moulded into kingdoms for the benefit of the princes of Napoleon's family ; the new sovereigns, or prefects rather, being strictly commanded to govern the realms intrusted to them, not for the benefit of their subjects, but for the benefit of France. All the national sympathies of the people, their habits, interests, manners and modes of thinking, were thus forced to give way to French laws, manners and institutions.

Every new war, every act of aggression, was declared to be undertaken, solely for the purpose of securing the peace of the continent and the liberty of the seas. And the champions of Napoleon, of the very sovereign during whose reign the Temple of Janus was never closed,—but whose fall gave the signal for a longer peace than Europe had ever known, and during which the ocean had swarmed with the ships of all nations,—have yet the

assurance to tell us, that their idols never drew the sword except in self-defence.

The deposed princes of Germany had not all perhaps been distinguished for the highest merit; but they had been upright rulers; their sway pressed lightly on their subjects. As individuals, they were plain, courteous, and unaffected in their manners, and mixed freely and constantly with the people; and the good Francis of Austria, in particular, gave ready audience to the humblest peasant in his dominions. The Elector of Hesse, the least popular of all, was accessible and frank in his manner, and governed his dominions with the open bluntness of a country squire superintending the affairs of a farm, rather than with the stately formality of an absolute sovereign.

All this was completely changed under French dominion; and Prefects and Commissioners, Douaniers and Chiefs of Police, mostly foreigners, unacquainted even with the language of the people, ruled with an arbitrary authority that the legitimate princes had never exercised. In lieu of the simple and unostentatious manners of the German courts, Jerome introduced at the Court of Cassel the flagrant licentiousness of Paris; and, following the orders of his brother, established a rigid system of etiquette that might have been suitable at Versailles under Louis XIV., but was insulting at Cassel in the nineteenth century. A slight specimen of this system, illustrated by a very simple anecdote, will be sufficient to indicate its real spirit and influence. It was usual, according to the new court etiquette, to invite the members of the States and other persons of distinction to *dine* with their Majesties every Sunday; the invitation limiting the guests to the honour of standing round the saloon to see the king and queen, the former

dressed *à la Henri Quatre*, dine in solemn state and silence, without taking any notice of the invited parties beyond drinking their healths. Custom and the practice of centuries could alone have rendered such a ceremony supportable; but introduced by a mere upstart, it was naturally felt as an insult by all who were forced to comply with its dictates. "I fear you are tired, Sir?" said a gentleman present on one of these occasions to a nobleman far advanced in years, who was trying to lean against a cornice for support; "I am, indeed," was the answer; "and having had the honour of sitting at the table of Frederick the Great, may well be tired of standing at the table of King Jerome." Institutions thus founded in total ignorance of human character and disregard of human feeling, were creating secret enemies, more numerous and more formidable than those overthrown in battle, at the very time when whole nations of foes were to be called to the field.

Whether a man of real genius and ability, possessing the best means of obtaining information to guide him in forming a correct judgment, ought to have foreseen the general rising and persevering resistance of the Spaniards, may still be a question liable to doubt. Toreno tells us, that Mr Pitt already contemplated the possibility of a popular war in Spain; and though we have no means of contradicting or confirming the statement, we know that Napoleon's boasted foresight did not reach so far. He evidently expected to seize an unresisting prey; and disgraceful as his whole mode of proceeding was, it was as much distinguished for want of ability and insight into character, as for its deep and damning treachery.

No trait of Spanish character is so strongly marked as the haughty national pride for which all ranks of the

people are distinguished, and which makes the humblest Spaniard deem himself the equal of peers and princes, and greatly the superior of all foreigners. The slave of the clergy, and without a particle of political freedom, the Spaniard is yet the most independent of men, deeming it an unworthy thought to suppose that Spanish liberty can possibly require the aid of popular laws and institutions. There may be much that is ludicrous in this extravagant conceit, but it has a beneficial tendency also ; for no man can well continue to be proud of himself and his individual character, who knows himself to be mean and unworthy. Whether this national and high *caste* feeling, now almost extinct perhaps, could have been gained over to the cause of the French, is uncertain ; but in the cause of humanity the attempt should at least have been made : Spanish pride should have been flattered if it could not be subdued ; and insults to a whole nation should at least have been spared, when it was intended to mould them into obedient subjects.

Diametrically the reverse was the conduct followed by Napoleon. Despising the military power of a nation that had no army, always scorning popular sentiments, he struck with haughty and insolent arrogance at the keenest and most sensitive feeling of the people, and roused those to madness, whom an open attack, made on one of the thousand idle pleas that despotism has always at command, would probably have found indifferent or lukewarm in the contest. The Spaniards saw their princes enticed into captivity by a succession of low devices worthy of an *alguazil* enticing a fugitive swindler from his place of concealment ; in profound peace they saw their fortresses seized by treachery ; and all this with a contempt of the people and government, a disregard

of the usages of civilized nations, which has no parallel in history. The citizens of Madrid were mowed down by the grape-shot of allies, whose presence in the capital had neither been called for nor desired ; and free-born Spaniards were sent to death, butchered in fact, on the sentence of French military commissions, who by no law of justice ever acknowledged on earth, could exercise the slightest act of authority in their country.

Nor did insult end here. On a deed extorted at Bayonne under a threat of death, Napoleon claimed absolute supremacy over the land, commanded the proudest of the proud to yield submission, even as a trader in human flesh, demands the surrender of a cargo of slaves the moment his bond of purchase is produced. Treatment so insulting, contempt of the people so openly displayed, would have aroused the meekest and most debased, and could not fail to kindle fierce and vindictive enmity in the breast of the haughty Spaniard, and call into action all the energy he was capable of exerting. The six sanguinary campaigns that followed, prove not only how faulty had been the views on which Napoleon undertook this nefarious act of aggression ; they furnish another illustration of that petty vanity which prevents an error from being acknowledged and atoned for, and which makes the second-rate character plunge into dishonour, because he cannot command sufficient dignity of conduct to retract a faulty step when once taken.

Nor was the war conducted with more ability than the original measures of aggression had displayed. The French armies in Spain acted without concert, the commanders were independent of each other, and had no supreme chief intrusted with authority to combine and direct their efforts. Jealousies between the leaders,

different views of the situation of affairs taken by different individuals, led necessarily to misunderstanding, and to all the evils certain to flow from such abundant sources of discord. This faulty arrangement is usually ascribed to the jealousy of Napoleon, who feared, it is said, to intrust any of his marshals with the vast power that would have been derived from the command of all the French armies in Spain. If this really was so, it would show not only great weakness, but a great want of ordinary judgment; for it was very clear that, in a hostile country, the loftiest of these commanders could not stand for a single hour without direct support from France.

The cause which prevented Napoleon from proceeding to the Peninsula in 1810, has never yet been explained or satisfactorily accounted for. Had he possessed a particle of that energy of character for which he has so often been lauded, he would certainly have placed himself at the head of his armies in that country, given unity to their operations, and secured the most probable means of bringing the ruinous contest to a successful termination.

The errors and disasters of the Spanish war did not, however, prevent him from rushing into a contest as impolitic and ill-concerted as the one raging beyond the Pyrenées. The Peninsular struggle was consuming his armies at a fatal rate; the victories of the British had broken the spell of French invincibility; the battle on which Europe looked with anxious suspense was still undecided, when Napoleon, instead of throwing his own sword into the scale, marched with all his forces against Russia!

It is not easy to discover the real motives that induced him to engage in this new contest. To believe his own

declaration, that the war was undertaken to enforce the Continental System, and that half a million of men were hurried into the heart of the Muscovite empire, merely to prevent the sale of a few cargoes of colonial produce or cotton goods, seems hardly possible. Nor is it easy to suppose that, at a time when his rule extended from the Ebro to the Niemen, a mere craving for enlarged dominions could induce him to enter upon such an enterprise. Still less could the desire of effacing in Russia the blots which the events in Spain had cast upon his scutcheon, have suggested the gigantic expedition; for it seemed more natural to restore the lustre of his tarnished arms in the Peninsula than in Russia. What then was the real motive of this undertaking; or had Napoleon any clearly-defined cause of action in this case? Was it not rather that absence of mental composure for which he seems to have been distinguished,—that craving for excitement which constantly preyed upon him,—that morbid confusion of ideas which made him fancy that greatness and glory called upon him to conquer in the battle-field, and reduce to the rank of an inferior empire the only formidable power still within the reach of his arms?

If the object of the enterprise rested on no very clear and well-defined view, the execution appeared from the first to be guided by a total want of judgment and ability. It seemed as if Napoleon had nothing to do but to assemble the vast armies so lavishly furnished by his sanguinary conscriptions: how they were to be supported, how to act in order to ensure victory, or to escape destruction in the event of failure, were points never thought of for a moment. Sweden and Turkey, the ancient and natural allies of France, the enemies of Russia, which was at war even with the last-mentioned power, and had shortly before wrested from the former

one of its most valuable provinces, were totally neglected, and never sought to be gained over to the cause of the invaders. To such an extent was this contempt of these natural allies carried, that the Swedes, to avenge the insults heaped upon them, turned their arms against the French; and the Turks, informed of the treachery of Tilsit and Erfurt, made peace with the Czar, and rendered the Russian army of Moldavia disposable at the most important period of the campaign!

Every book of geography describes the soil, climate, and half cultivated steppes of Russia; but Napoleon could draw no inference from the knowledge so abundantly furnished. Myriads that the most fertile regions of Europe could not have maintained on the same narrow lines of march, were hurried without supplies into the vast, thinly-peopled, and half-barbarous empire of the Czars; and to such a distance from aid and support, that they were certain of having frost and famine allied against them, long before they could return to the protection of their own frontiers. All this was evident; but Napoleon foresaw nothing; and when friendly fortune seemed once to smile during this long and dreary march,—when at Borodino the protecting goddess offered him a chance of ultimate success, he wanted resolution to strike home for that victory which could alone save his army from certain ruin!

That the man who brought destruction upon thousands used no personal exertion to arrest the progress of demoralisation, we have seen; and we may safely agree with the Marquis de Chambray, that he was "far below his fortunes and his fame."

The vast resources of his extensive dominions enabled him to bring powerful armies into the field, before the troops of distant Russia and weakened Prussia could

assemble in equal force. At Lützen and Bautzen fortune again seemed to smile upon him ; but it is evident that he mistook a very transitory gleam for a full return of favour, and was thus induced by vanity, false pride, want of decision, want of character in fact, to cast away the opportunity of concluding an advantageous peace still offered him at Prague ; " offered him six times at least," even by Bignon's own admission. Writing to Count Münster after the Congress of Prague, Stein says, " If the madness of Napoleon had not given the negotiation an unexpected turn, we should have had a ruinous and miserable peace."* Spain was lost at Vittoria ; the sanguinary conflicts of Lützen and Bautzen had given more confidence to the vanquished than benefit to the victors ; Germany was rising ; and Metternich had stated at Dresden, that in the event of hostilities being renewed, Austria would throw her weight into the scale of the Allies. What fair prospect of success could then remain for the French?

That Napoleon was not altogether blind to the dangers of his situation is clear ; for notwithstanding his foolish boast at the opening of the campaign, that " not a single village of the empire should be surrendered," he had already offered to yield entire provinces. He was even willing to accept the terms proposed by the Allies, and did so after the expiration of the truce had dissolved the Congress : thus showing that it was a want of firmness and decision,—the influence of vanity acting on a weak judgment,—the will but not the courage to retract, which made him waver and hesitate till the golden opportunity was lost.

A great deal of the same want of character was dis-

* Lebensbilder, &c.

played in 1814. Nothing was done to awaken enthusiasm in his favour, or against the invaders; and at a moment when the nation was at least very lukewarm in his cause, the Legislative Body, the nominal representatives of the people, were insulted and dismissed. On the first reverses of the campaign, his commissioner at Chatillon was directed to "save the capital at any price;" but with the first smile of fortune came a counter-order directing that nothing should be signed, the victor of Montmirail already fancying himself "nearer Münich than the Allies were to Paris;" an idle rhodomontade which was soon circulated, and which proved highly injurious to his cause at the moment.

No sooner had the events of the campaign taken an unfavourable turn, than pressing directions were sent to accept any terms: and the man once so haughty and overbearing, who had publicly declared that "not a village of the grand empire should be surrendered," that "he would not sit upon a dishonoured throne," now offered to resign provinces and fortresses which he had inherited from the Directory—offered to purchase with the treasures of France, permission to retain a sceptre which these very concessions proved him totally unworthy of holding. Whatever tears of sorrow and contrition may effect, the unmanly tears shed by Napoleon when informed of the surrender of Paris, will only deepen and not efface the dark stain this ignoble conduct must ever cast upon his name.

The advocates of Napoleon generally claim for him the honour of having terminated the Revolution; of having calmed the tempest of national discord, as the God of Ocean is described calming with a wave of his hand the storm-raised billows of the foaming main. But the best authenticated facts give the most direct

contradiction to this claim; for the Consulate and Empire were nothing more than two phases of the Revolution itself. The Reign of Terror ended with the fall of Robespierre and the Mountain party; and what remained of the destructive elements of the great convulsions fell with the Convention. The Directory was essentially a conservative government; the wild elements of discord which the troubles had evoked were repressed if not entirely extinguished: the pike-armed multitudes, the previous rulers of the country, had been subdued, and the revolutionary committees and tribunals abolished—swept from the land which they had drenched with noble and innocent blood; and society, released from the sanguinary tyranny of the Robespierre faction, had readily gathered in orderly and respectable forms round the new authorities. The government of the Directory was never distinguished for great talents or energy, and had a difficult task to perform when succeeding to the frightful rule of the Convention: it was guilty of errors and of crimes, was not always victorious; but had the merit of restoring the supremacy of the law, of establishing a regularly working government, and might be looked upon as mild and paternal, when compared to the fierce and unsparing despotism by which it had been preceded. The Directory remained, during the five years of its reign, undisturbed by any great domestic insurrection, and thus laid the foundation—did the best part of the work in fact generally ascribed to Napoleon; for any society bound together by a high degree of civilization, though momentarily dispersed by a revolutionary storm, must, from the very nature of its connecting links, gather rapidly round established authority as soon as the destroying tempest has passed away.

And such was the case in France under the Direc-

tory; and though Napoleon's advocates only darken the faults of his predecessors, and keep their merits entirely out of sight, it is certain, nevertheless, that when he succeeded to power on the 18th of Brumaire, he at once found himself at the head of a fully working government, the reins of which it was easy for him to shorten and direct at pleasure.

This was greatly indeed facilitated by his being appointed to administer a new constitution totally unknown to the people, who could not therefore oppose any immediate barriers to the authority of a chief magistrate armed with the full force of the sword. He was thus absolute from the very commencement of the Consulate; and by destroying the liberty of the press, and weakening the powers of legislative control which the constitution intended the Senate and Chambers to exercise over the executive, he easily rendered his absolutism permanent. As Consul and Emperor, his government was a pure military dictatorship, the uncontrolled strength of which he constantly strove to augment by centralising all the executive powers of the State in his own hands.

Nor was absolute power the only advantages to which Napoleon succeeded; for, contrary to the direct assertions of his biographers, who tell us that he found only, on his accession to power, defeated armies and an invaded frontier; he found the Republic in possession of vast conquests, the frontier extended on every point, and defended by armies that had terminated the campaign with splendid and decisive victories. The triumphs of the Directory had foiled the Continental efforts of England, Russia, and Austria, and dissolved the most formidable coalition that had been combined against France; and when Napoleon assumed the reins of government,

the last named power stood alone in the arena, evidently unable to achieve singly, what had not been effected by the aid of the mighty Allies that fought by her side during the previous campaign.

The vast power thus derived from the Directory and the Revolution in general, centred in the hands of a successful soldier, was sure to be supported by the full force of the sword, the best support in times of public convulsion. And secured on a firm, and, in France, popular foundation, the Consular autocracy gained an extent of public confidence far exceeding any which preceding governments had enjoyed ; a confidence that necessarily augmented the very strength out of which it arose. The elements of revolutionary force were thus concentrated, but not resigned ; and civil war and resistance to the home authorities having long ceased, they were directed to foreign conquest. Wielding with unshackled hands the thunderbolts forged by Jacobin conventions, Napoleon was enabled to carry the principle that "might is right,"—the only principle the French Revolution had faithfully adhered to through all its phases,—much farther than any of his predecessors had done ; as far, indeed, as Alaric and Attila had carried it—and, civilisation and altered times considered, in a manner more ruthless and unsparing than was ever charged against these barbaric monarchs.

CHAPTER III.

LABOURS OF PEACE: CODE NAPOLEON. IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT, COURT MANNERS, CONVERSATION. MADAME DE STAEL, MADAME DE CHEVREUSE, PRINCESS HATZFELD.

Though it is usual for Napoleon's biographers to represent him as a great reformer, legislator and politician, as well as a great soldier,—as a wise and enlightened ruler, distinguished alike in the cabinet and the field,—we suspect that his fame rests principally on his victories and military reputation, and that the other brilliant qualities assigned to him, have been added rather as ornaments to the picture, than from any firm conviction of his being really entitled to them. Justice, however, claims from us some remarks on the subject; and as the "Code Napoleon" will, no doubt, be looked upon as its author's greatest labour of peace, we shall here place it in front line.

Before the Revolution, France possessed no code of laws applicable to the whole country: provinces, districts, and even cities, retained ancient legal institutions, founded often upon mere practice, which had belonged to them before they were annexed to the crown. Only the royal ordinances, published at times by the Sovereigns of the House of Bourbon, had authority

over the whole kingdom: these, with some laws of general application, had before been collected into *Codes;* and there was the Code Henri IV. and the Code Louis XIV., both necessarily very imperfect, as the rights and privileges of communities, the tenure by which property was often held, rendered a general assimilation impossible. It was only after the Revolution had levelled all rights and distinctions, swept the very name of law from the soil, and feloniously destroyed whatever property individuals had possessed or acquired under ancient forms and institutions, that a general code, applicable to the whole country, could be compiled.

In the first National Assembly, attention was already directed to the subject, and it was repeatedly taken up by subsequent Republican Governments; but the stormy nature of the times, and the rapid succession of short-lived authorities, rendered all these efforts abortive. When anarchy had exhausted itself, and order again began to rally round the Consulate, the project was renewed, and Napoleon appointed a commission, consisting of Tronchet, Portalis, Molville and Bigot de Preamenneu, lawyers of talents and eminence, to draw up a plan for a general code of laws. At the end of four months the labours of the commission were finished; they were then printed and published, and submitted to various authorities and tribunals, who were desired to report upon them. These reports being published in their turn, were laid before a committee of the Council of State, presided over by Cambacérès, himself a lawyer of distinction. The mass having been brought into shape by the labour of this body, next came before the Council of State itself; and what was here approved, having been collected and ratified, was issued to the nation under the title of *Code Civil des Français.*

What share Napoleon had in the formation of this Code, beyond the merit of ordering it to be compiled, we cannot pretend to say: that he frequently attended the Council of State at the time when its clauses were under consideration, is certain; but that his presence was always beneficial, is by no means so clear. Speaking of his labours in the Council, Pelet says, "Business made slow progress under the presidency of Napoleon; for he often fell into reveries, during which the discussions languished; or because he indulged in political digressions foreign to the subject." Again, "The sittings rendered long by the digressions of the Emperor, were never too long for him; he has sometimes detained us at St Cloud from nine in the morning till five in the evening."

When we remind the reader that Napoleon's first act on attaining power was to banish a number of citizens without trial, and who were not even under accusation; when we farther recollect that he urged the Council of State, on the morning after the explosion of the Infernal Machine, to shoot without ceremony some twenty individuals of the Jacobin party—on this occasion the innocent party—merely, as he expressed it, to intimidate the rest, we shall hardly be called upon to confirm the high praise so often bestowed on his brilliant conceptions as a jurist. And this is saying nothing of the midnight executions at Cairo, certain to be looked upon as murders, because committed in the dark; it is saying nothing of the murders committed by French military tribunals in countries in which the French possessed no legal authority, whether by conquest or otherwise, to establish tribunals exercising power beyond the ranks of the French army. We may safely venture to assert, indeed, that he did not possess a single clear idea of justice and the claims of

right, and could never elevate his mind above the lessons of unprincipled violence, instilled into it by the Revolution. It would be out of the question, in a brief sketch like the present, for a military man to offer any opinion on the merits or demerits of the *Code Napoleon;* but we may be allowed to say, that it has planted a principle of the lowest democracy in France; a principle which it will require years and a combination of fortunate circumstances again to root out from the soil. The *Code Napoleon* weakens parental authority, breaks in upon the government of families, limits testamentary power, and establishes an equal division of property. The respect and deference due to age, seniority, to the heads of families, is destroyed; and the natural links that should bind the different members together, weakened and rent asunder by this consciousness of prospective independence. Marriage is considered a mere conventional contract: the Code admits divorce; allows those to be capriciously separated whom heaven had joined; and is indeed distinguished by an odour of atheism which, as Capefigue tells us, pervades the whole compilation from first to last.

That the ultra-aristocratic Napoleon did not perceive the democratic tendency of his work, is sufficiently clear; for there is an evident contradiction between this ultra-democratic code, and a military despotism surrounded by pompous aristocratic institutions and a splendidly endowed hereditary nobility. Sir Walter Scott, himself a lawyer, seems to hold this code in no very high estimation: German jurists have written of it to the same effect; and the Free Towns of Germany, on which it was forced during the period of French supremacy, returned to their ancient form of laws as soon as they were liberated from the yoke of France.

The internal Government of the Empire, though conducted with great regularity, was rigorous and unbending to a degree which would now hardly be credited. The obedience to higher commands was implicit; and the whole of the administrative body moved with the order of a military corps, allowing neither obstacles nor cases of individual suffering to impede their progress. The laws which punished desertion and all evasion of the conscription were terrible: parents were held responsible for their children, and poor peasants were often fined 1500 francs for attempting to screen a son or relative, the only hope of their declining years. The satellites of power swarmed in every direction, and the humblest cottages were often placed at the mercy of *gens d'armes*, who, seated round the hearths, consumed the property of aged parents trembling for the safety of their offspring.

The Prefects pursued the refractory conscripts with relentless severity, and every day the tribunals condemned young men to work in chains on the roads, fortifications and in the dock-yards. Equal rigour was used in levying the heavy taxes and imposts, rendered necessary by the long-continued wars and total stagnation of trade. Neither the wretchedness of huts nor the poor earnings of toil were spared: every thing was seized. Prefect and magistrate listened to no petition: for their duty to the Emperor left no room for the duties of humanity; while the chains that fettered the press, prevented a single complaint or even murmur from being heard.

It was the same in all the States attached to France. Wherever the Imperial eagles winged their flight, ancient nationality ceased to exist, and all institutions founded on the wants, habits, feelings and local situa-

tion of the people, gave way to French laws, conscriptions and the rigid system of uniformity introduced under the Imperial regime, which thus became a political couch of Procrustes to all who dwelt beneath the iron sceptre of Napoleon.

More perfectly to root his authority in the soil than in the hearts of his subjects, the Emperor latterly divided France into four districts, each presided over by a Counsellor of State at the head of a number of Commissaries General of Police, who held strict watch over public opinion in the large towns within their jurisdiction. The reports of the commissioners, gathered by the counsellors, and enriched by the contents of letters opened at the various post-stations, were drawn up into regular form and submitted to the Emperor, who derived an ignoble delight from the perusal of all the low and vulgar slanders thus submitted to his inspection.

Even when in the field, he had reports sent to him from the Ministers at Paris, particularly from those of the Police and the Interior ; and frequently gave directions from his head-quarters on points of home administration, which were to be acted or reported upon. This gave him the appearance of watching from his very camp over the welfare of his subjects ; though many of the documents published by Bignon in support of this view, seem evidently drawn up for mere effect. During his Prussian campaign, for instance, he directs the Minister of the Interior to devise some plan for the encouragement of literature, and of poetry in particular ; but commands, that " his own praise is not to be celebrated by any of the writers who may contend for the prizes !" From Posen he orders a meeting of the most distinguished members of the Jewish persuasion to be held at Paris, for the purpose of giving a new interpretation to

the Law of Moses, suited to modern times, and calculated to raise the Jewish nation from the state of abasement into which he declares it to have fallen.

This assembly led of course to nothing; and the *Belles-lettres* remained at the lowest possible ebb. Literature was considered only as an engine of police, and the minister at the head of that department was the *Magnus Apollo* of the Imperial regime. In 1811, that high functionary actually ordered the minor theatres in Paris to bring the Comet on the stage—*de jouer la Comète*—and ridicule the crowds who assembled every night along the Boulevards to gaze upon the brilliant meteor, and listen to the auguries which proclaimed it an omen of approaching disaster.

But notwithstanding the evils that weighed upon the country, and the sufferings the people were forced to endure, there was a stern impartiality in the general administration of affairs that tended in some measure to redeem its severity: the iron hand of power pressed heavily indeed, but pressed equally on all. Between man and man the law also was fairly administered; and where the Government was no party, justice was fully accessible as far as the influence of the tribunals extended; for as a body, the Bench and the Bar escaped the debasing corruption of the time, and retained their character untarnished to the last.

The taxes though heavy, and in many cases impolitic and detrimental to the progress of industry, were levied on the whole population in a manner that contrasted as favourably with the ancient regime granting exemptions to the nobility and clergy, as to the capricious exactions, arbitrary confiscations, and forced loans, of the Convention and Directory. The division of the great estates at the Revolution, the consequent extension and im-

provement in agriculture as well as the advantages stipulated for French trade with the allied or tributary States, rather augmented the means of the people, and enabled them to meet the demands of Government more readily than could otherwise have been expected. But what tended, above all, to redeem the vices of the Government in the estimation of the nation, was the glory acquired by the French arms, and the high station to which France had been raised under Napoleon's rule. The pride of victory, the spoils of the vanquished, flattered the vanity and gratified the rapacity of the many; who, in their enthusiasm, not only forgot the sacrifices at which the triumphs had been purchased, but forgot that these very sacrifices implied from their nature a day of early and terrible retribution.

What France and Europe lost or gained by the Revolution or the reign of Napoleon, it would be useless to inquire; for we cannot tell what Europe would have been at this day had not Providence, for inscrutable purposes, willed that the great changes we have seen should arise in the midst of this frightful convulsion. With civil liberty fully established in England and America, its principles openly discussed in most European languages, we cannot see why it should not have made more rapid progress in peace than in war, and without inflicting on the world the long years of suffering that followed on the overthrow of the French monarchy. That Napoleon left any permanent impress of his reign on the fortunes of the world, cannot be said. The great changes brought about by the Revolution had been effected before he attained to power: he was eminently aristocratic in disposition; and the period which immediately followed his rule was, on the contrary, wildly democratic in spirit; and it is only now,

perhaps, that society at large is returning to sounder views of policy and government.

With the aid of a Council of State, allowed to exist because it was a mere advising Council, totally destitute of power, but composed, we are told, of the ablest men in France, and constantly engaged in devising measures for benefiting the country and giving *éclat* to the sovereign, it may be said that very little was done, when we consider that the Government possessed ample authority to carry every adopted proposal into immediate effect. The Ministers and the Council of State had the contents of all the Bourbon archives before them, as well as those of the Convention and Directory; and these last contained, no doubt, many valuable suggestions, however mixed up with folly and extravagance. The Bourbon archives furnished the first idea of the Confederation of the Rhine: those of the National Assembly and Convention called for the completion of the *Code Civil*.

That great improvements have taken place in Europe since the year 1789, will not be denied. The Revolution could not altogether root out civilisation even from France; and in civilized times, with the press already in full vigour, rapid communications existing between the different States of the great European Commonwealth, it was impossible that half a century should pass over the world without adding greatly to the mass of human knowledge. But we have no right to say that Napoleon and the French Revolution contributed in aught to this improvement. The very reverse might be pleaded with some appearance of success; for the wild excesses of the Republic, and the unprincipled tyranny of the Empire, made men shrink back for protection to ancient institutions, often faulty, but less oppressive and insulting than worthless equality, which caused the very terms of

liberty, philosophy, and universal philanthropy, to become absolutely hateful, as almost synonymous with the countless crimes committed in their name. And yet history seems to show, that society always makes greater progress in the midst of political convulsions than in times of peace and calmness; better adapted, it might be thought, to the cause of general improvement. It would almost appear as if such great political tempests were required to awaken men from their habitual lethargy, or to break down the barriers which antiquated forms, valuable perhaps at the time of their origin, continued to oppose to the extension of human happiness, after society had outgrown the state of infancy for which they were intended.

The charter granted by Louis XVIII., the liberty of the press and the freedom of debate, following so suddenly on the military absolutism of the empire; the reign of peace—with full openings for a return of trade, industry, and the elegant arts—succeeding immediately on the demoralizing wars of Napoleon, caused so marked a revolution in the state of French society, that it is not easy to conjecture what fruit the Imperial constitution would ultimately have produced. But what the Emperor's reign *had* produced when the second occupation of Paris terminated his career, was sufficiently apparent. Those who then visited France, and had opportunities for observation, saw that in all ranks coarse manners and military rudeness had already made fearful inroads on the elegant politeness natural to the people, and for which they were once so eminently distinguished. They saw religion disregarded; the clergy—the ministers of the Gospel, and the interpreters of God's high will—the most powerless, uninfluential and neglected portion of the community. Corruption and infidelity were at

their height; and morality, the object of levity and derision far more than of admiration and respect.

It has been the fashion to laud in very extravagant terms what are called the great works, "magnificent roads, bridges, aqueducts and monuments," constructed by Napoleon for the benefit of the country and the embellishment of the capital. The writer of this Memoir cannot pretend to know what France and Paris were previous to the Revolution, and is unable to judge therefore of the improvements made during the fifteen years of Consular and Imperial absolutism; but contrasting France with other Continental countries, it is not very easy to discover them.

From the period of Louis XIV., if not from that of Francis I., France was looked upon as the wealthiest and most polished of the Continental nations, and the country in which the fine arts had made the greatest progress after forsaking the soil of Italy. All Continental travellers who visited Paris during the last of the Bourbon kings, speak of France and its capital as greatly surpassing other countries and capitals in beauty, luxury, splendour and magnificence. The Revolution had destroyed institutions, many *châteaux*, some sepulchral monuments perhaps, but neither public works, edifices nor monuments; so that France retained under Napoleon the advantages it had possessed in these respects over the Continental States; and as his reign pressed heavily upon the latter, and necessarily prevented them, while sinking under constant war and defeat, from making great internal improvements, France ought, at his abdication, to have stood immeasurably above its neighbours in regard to "magnificent roads, bridges, aqueducts and monuments;" whereas in 1815 very little of this superiority was visible. What was

really great was of an ancient date: the new works, few of which were finished, could lay no claim to greatness when considered as national undertakings, executed at the command of an absolute Emperor, the ruler of France, Italy, Holland and Switzerland. The *Musée Napoleon*, commenced by the Directory, and formed principally of the spoils torn from the feeble and defenceless states of Italy, will hardly claim much admiration.

All the principal roads through France date from the time of Louis XIV., and are laid down even on the maps of Cassini. That many have been added since, and under the reign of Napoleon also, need not be doubted: for in all civilized countries, roads necessarily augment with the progress of general improvement; but even now the high-roads in France are very indifferent, and the cross-roads extremely bad. And independently altogether of such works as the Menai and Tain Bridges, and the Caledonian Canal, the public works executed in France during Napoleon's reign cannot for a moment enter into the slightest competition with those executed in England during the same period. The only roads constructed by Napoleon that deserve any attention, are those leading over the Alps; and of these it will be expected that we should say a word.

In former times the Lords of Piedmont and Lombardy thought it good policy to leave the mountains as impassable as possible, and not to tempt French invaders by offering them good roads to march along. After the conquest of Italy, the French naturally considered it right to unite the different provinces of their Empire by good roads: and hence those across the Alps. That the works deserve every praise, both as regards the plan and execution, no one will deny; but it is by comparison only that the greatness of such works can be established,—by the

magnitude of the labour, and by the skill and genius displayed in vanquishing the opposing obstacles. Giving every credit to the French engineers employed on this laudable work, it must still be recollected that they had only passive resistance to overcome: for rocks, however hard, can neither parry nor return the blows of the iron instruments employed in their demolition: so that a certain quantity of plain continued labour was sure to effect the object in view.

The small town of Peterhead in Scotland, the easternmost point of Britain, and situated on a headland projecting into the Northern Sea, having no harbour capable of sheltering vessels of any burthen, built a stone-pier front on to the very ocean, facing its full fury, and behind which the largest Greenland whalers now defy every storm, and rest in perfect safety, while the foam of the broken waves flies high and harmless over mainyards and crosstrees of the sheltered vessels. It was not passive resistance alone that was to be overcome in the execution of this gallant work, but constantly recurring active resistance: mining tides had to be counteracted day after day; the gigantic billows of the north, borne onwards by the tempest's wing, and threatening to sweep away and break to fragments all that opposed their fury, had to be checked and confronted. Thrice the might of the elements destroyed the labour of years; but resolute men persevered: and the noble work now stands as a lasting monument of what skill and constancy can effect with small means. The roads over the Alps, inferior works effected by vastly superior means, can hardly therefore be looked upon as great works for a powerful sovereign, since they are surpassed by the labour which a poor northern burgh executed by almost private enterprise.

The schools established under the first Revolutionary government, and remodelled under the Consulate and the Empire, have also been placed to the credit of the Emperor. If we believe Schlösser, a most extravagant admirer of Napoleon, these establishments were well calculated to form good soldiers, engineers and Imperial *employés ;* but ill adapted to benefit the people at large, "who," as the German professor says, "went out empty-handed from the arrangement, and were left to provide for their own education as best they might." Chateaubriand speaks still more harshly, and calls these schools so many seminaries of vice, in which the youths of France were assembled by beat of drum, "to be instructed in atheism, immorality and a disregard of virtue."

As we are here speaking of Napoleon's labours of peace, we shall endeavour to sketch a few traits of his court : so strangely inconsistent, so highly lauded on one side, and so bitterly ridiculed on the other, as to render any attempt to give its true portraiture a task of almost hopeless difficulty.

Immediately after the 18th Brumaire, the Palace of the Tuileries, then called the Palace of Government, was divided between the three Consuls ; but as the whole power of the executive speedily centred in the hands of Napoleon, he soon became the sole occupant of the royal residence ; in which he strove to revive all the forms of ancient etiquette. During the Consulate, the Villa of Malmaison remained the summer residence ; and here his *fêtes,* though already brilliant, were still on a small scale, and retained more of the easy freedom of society than was afterwards permitted. Here the Consul himself still took part in the games of his aides-de-camp and other members of his family ; joined the dance, to

the great danger of ladies' dresses; for though a keen dancer, he could neither keep time nor follow the figures. He entered cheerfully into the management of private theatricals; in which his sisters, Duroc, Murat and others, sometimes repeated on the stage the humble parts they had already acted in real life, as they also rehearsed the more brilliant characters in which fortune yet destined them to appear on the great stage of the world.

With augmenting power, the simplicity of this first court gradually gave way to greater splendour and a more rigid ceremonial, till the Imperial dignity brought all the superannuated etiquette of the ancient court in its train.

A number of brilliant officers surrounded the Emperor: they were mostly married, for Napoleon insisted on their forming alliances with the best families in France; and this by degrees brought a number of ladies of rank to the court. But the constant attempts to force back the old system of etiquette had necessarily the most injurious effects; as it obliged members of the new court to act parts totally uncongenial with all their previously formed habits and manners. There were fair women and brave men at the court of the Tuileries; there were rich dresses, jewels, and decorations; but the polished elegance of good society was wanting to the whole. Some of the high functionaries and *parvenus* mistook haughty reserve for dignity; others, negligence and abrupt inattention for ease and independence; and the manners of Republican camps still shone out under the gilded domes of the Imperial palace. There was awkwardness, forwardness, discomfort, or too much boldness. The conversation turned generally on military affairs and adventures, intermixed with speeches of obsequious flattery addressed to Napoleon; but in a manner that bore no resemblance to the

dignified style in which gentlemen address their sovereign. Of the ladies of the court Talleyrand said, "that many did not know how to walk on carpets, that others could not sit down in the stiff, ungraceful, diamond-spangled dresses, so fashionable during the Consulate and earlier periods of the Empire." Several of the young ladies were, however, as graceful as witty, but few possessed the tone of polished society, which consists as little in theatrical attitudes as in the courtesies of Madame Campan's academy, or the steps of a Vestris. Josephine certainly presided with considerable grace at these parties; foreigners of rank, and some of the members of the ancient *noblesse* also helped to soften down the remnants of Republican rudeness; but the influence of the few could not easily change the nature of the mass, composed of soldiers of fortune, of women of all ranks and classes, gathered promiscuously together by the chances of the Revolution; and the Court, though distinguished for magnificence in all exterior appearances, was to the very last destitute of elegance and refinement. The court-dresses and costumes, over which Napoleon watched with all the care he bestowed on points of etiquette, evinced, as still shown by the collected drawings, the extreme of bad taste. Of this he too often set an example himself. At a grand ball given by the city of Paris, soon after his marriage with Marie Louise, he appeared in an embroidered court-dress, and with a feathered hat *à la Henri IV.*; and to show that he was Emperor in the midst of surrounding kings, remained covered during the whole of the evening.

Eminently aristocratic in his disposition, Napoleon's predilection for the Fauxbourg St Germain and the forms of the old Court became every day more apparent. He was charmed with the manners of the ancient *noblesse*,

whom he courted during the whole of his reign, though he was himself rude, abrupt, and impatient: "an agreeable speech rarely if ever," as Capefigue says, "passing his lips." Towards ladies, especially those of his Court, his conversation was inelegant in the highest degree, often indeed harsh and impertinent. Louis XIV., the proudest monarch of his time, never spoke to a lady unless hat in hand; but Napoleon's manner was different, he overwhelmed both old and young with questions regarding their age and their faults, and insulted them by the rudest remarks: "You are a little fool!" "You are always ill dressed!" "You are already old!" "There you come again with the same gown!" "Your skin is dark and coarse!"—were speeches of a character too often addressed to defenceless women, forced to submit in silence to the rudeness of enthroned vulgarity.

This statement, taken in a great measure from Capefigue, corresponds so perfectly with the accounts of the Imperial court which the author of the present Memoir repeatedly heard when stationed at Paris in 1815 and 1816, and enjoying the best possible means of obtaining information, that he cannot entertain the slightest doubt of its perfect accuracy. Varnhagen von Ense, in his *Memorabilia*, and Count Schlitz, in his *Memoirs of a German Statesman*, both concur in the description here given of Napoleon's manners. The last-named author, fully entitled to credit when relating what came under his own observation, tells us indeed that he heard Napoleon terminate an angry conversation with the Duke of Otranto, by commanding the minister to "be gone," by thundering out the insolent French word "*Sortez*." On another occasion, the same writer was present when a French gentleman solicited assistance to enlarge the halls of a scientific institution: the Emperor listened,

and spoke a few words in reply; but when the petitioner attempted to urge the request, the Sovereign instantly silenced him with the rude words, "*Vous êtes un impertinent*,"—"You are an impertinent fellow." "It was besides well known," continues the Count, "that the Emperor's displeasure could proceed even to blows, and that he had often struck relatives, courtiers, and attendants: Prince Jerome, the senator Count P—, and others."

After he was made Consul for life, St Cloud became Napoleon's habitual residence; but was soon deemed too small and citizen-like for his brilliant court. Versailles, with its magnificent buildings and extensive gardens, in which Louis XIV. had displayed his stately royalty, completely captivated his fancy; and he often contemplated the idea of restoring it to its former splendour. In imagination he already anticipated the time when, with gold-headed cane in hand, he should descend the grand marble stair, followed by a crowd of ribbon and plume-adorned courtiers, even as paintings represent the *Grand Monarch* attended and almost worshipped by all the gallantry of his time. But pleasing as these anticipations were, the restoration of Versailles required more leisure than could be bestowed upon it; and wishing, after the peace of Tilsit, to receive the Russian ambassador with regal state, he caused the palace of Fontainbleau to be prepared; and in the style of the ancient monarchs, invited the most distinguished members of his court to accompany him on a hunting-party to that magnificent residence, situated in the midst of one of the noblest royal forests in Europe.

And here the new sovereign revelled in all the dazzling state and ceremonial of the ancient court. There were hunting-parties in the morning, dinners and balls in the evening. The gentlemen followed the chase on horse-

back, the ladies in open carriages, and all in prescribed hunting uniforms. Gentlemen wore green gold-laced jackets turned up with crimson velvet, white small clothes and jack-boots; and even Fouché and Talleyrand had to appear with belted *couteau de chasse* in this costume, so ludicrously at variance with their habits and pursuits.

All the forms of the Court of Louis XIV., from his grand *levées* of state, to his evening entertainments, were here resuscitated; for the Emperor was anxious to give the Russians a high opinion of the dignity and splendour of his court. Nor were the intrigues and gallantries of the olden time forgotten: they seemed to constitute an essential part, indeed, of this voyage to Fontainbleau; tales and legends recorded the successful adventures of fortunate lovers, and fame naturally ascribed to the Emperor the most brilliant of the triumphs achieved. "Monarchs seldom sue in vain:" and if we believe the statement of Constant, Napoleon formed no exception to the rule; and finding conquest so easy, perhaps thought himself justified in suing without even a semblance of delicacy.

During the winter, the Court returned to the Tuileries; and Napoleon, who had given splendid hunting-parties at Fontainbleau, astonished Paris by the gaiety of his *fêtes* and balls. Among these masquerades were the most brilliant, and seemed to afford especial pleasure to the Emperor; who fancied that he could unravel the web of intrigues by aid of the freedom of speech always allowed beneath the mask. Accompanied by Duroc, he generally attended in person therefore; but though shrouded in a domino, he was rarely unknown. His gait and figure were familiar to most persons, and he never disguised his voice or gesticulation; any speech

which he addressed, either of gallantry to a lady or of sarcasm to a gentleman, instantly betrayed him. The adventures to which these balls gave rise, the *liaisons* formed, the intrigues detected, jealousies excited, tended greatly to divert the Parisians. The general officers, brought up in the Republican camps, were rarely men of gallantry; and report often ascribed to their beautiful brides more predilection for the young and accomplished sons of the North, than for their brave but inelegant and illiterate husbands. Nor did the ladies of the Imperial family escape remark: the gallantries of Napoleon's sisters were freely canvassed, and his own conquests as freely extolled.

That Napoleon was justified in establishing an hereditary nobility, when he assumed the Imperial dignity, cannot be denied; for few will believe in the permanent existence of monarchical institutions—of any political institutions on a great scale perhaps—unless supported by a powerful and influential aristocracy. But though his Dukes and Counts may be forgiven him, though their creation may entitle him to praise indeed, it is impossible to look upon the restoration of the etiquette, forms and ceremonial of the old court, its powdered heads, embroidered coats, laced ruffles, and licentious gallantries, without being struck by the narrow compass of mind which resuscitated all this vicious folly: either from delighting in its false glitter, or from the belief that the tasteless ornaments of fallen royalty could strengthen and consolidate the power which had arisen on its ruins.

The etiquette and ceremonies of the ancient Court had been the growth of ages, had gradually assumed their shape and form, had been associated in public opinion with attributes of power; and had not, as they

did on their restoration, started suddenly into existence to shock common sense by their unmanliness and absurdity. In their time these ceremonies might have been respected and beneficial; but their time was past; they had been swept away by the Revolution, years had elapsed since they had disappeared from the scene; and they were evidently, when again brought forward, as much at variance with the new spirit of the age as ill calculated to give strength and stability to the new power which it had founded. Their only certain effect was to awaken ridicule, always dangerous to authority. And nothing but a feeling of sorrow for the weakness of human nature could keep even gravity serious when beholding the demagogues of the Revolution, former members of the Convention and Jacobin club, men who had cheered the goddess of Reason, and sported the red cap of Jacobinism, acting the part of laced and ruffled courtiers, and striving with obsequious awkwardness to imitate the elegant manners of the polished and accomplished nobles of the ancient Court! But these exhibitions, however diverting, had a melancholy side also: for the total want of principle they displayed necessarily darkened the stain of the frightful crimes committed on the score of principle; by displaying so many men who had acted an influential part in great national affairs, entirely devoid of political honesty, moral dignity, and consistency of character.

The revival of these antiquated puerilities was, as is well known, owing entirely to Napoleon's ultra-aristocratic predilections, of which Paul Louis Courier already formed a just estimate, when the Consul assumed the Imperial dignity. Describing the comedy of consulting the regiment in which he was serving as Lieutenant, this very clever writer has the following passage: "Bona-

parte prefers a title to a name. Poor man! his ideas are far below his fortunes. I suspected as much when I saw him give his little sister Pauline to Prince Borghese, and fancy that Borghese was doing him a great honour. Cæsar understood things better, and was indeed a very different character. He assumed no worn-out titles, but made his very name a title superior to that of Kings."*

That manners and public morality improved under the Imperial reign, and were far superior under Napoleon to what they had been under the Convention and Directory, is very certain; and full credit may be given him for the change, though arising probably from the general good feeling of the people, anxious to escape from the profligacy which had distinguished the Republican governments. But those who extol the elegant manners displayed, and strict propriety of conduct observed at the Imperial court, forget how much their statements are at variance with the pernicious example shown by the highest persons in the empire: for few will believe in this virtue and elegance, who recollect that the sovereign was coarse and rude in the extreme, and that his gallantries were as open and avowed as those of the ladies of his family. It is true that Napoleon, though he frequently indulged in unworthy amours, never allowed a female to exercise the least influence over him; but this seems to have been the result of temperament more than of character: incapable of attachment, he could not be swayed by love; and, too selfish for friendship, he had courtiers and flatterers, bold and determined followers, though not a single friend.

Were we to take Capefigue's statement, that "an agreeable speech never passed Napoleon's lips," as fully

* Memoires, Correspondance de Paul Louis Courier. Paris, 1828.

established, it would be needless to inquire farther into the merits of his conversational powers; but others have borne different testimony, and it behoves us, therefore, to give at least an opinion on the result of the conflicting evidence. This will not be favourable to the Imperial claims; for the strongest evidence seems to show that his discourse was in general declamatory, vituperative, and dictatorial; but that his powers of conversation, properly so called, were of a feeble and inferior order. Count Schlitz, who accompanied the hereditary Prince of Mecklenburg to Paris, and was a guest at the palace of Fontainbleau during the autumn of 1807, goes still farther, and tells us, on the authority of the Prince and of the Arch-Chancellor Dalberg, that the Emperor's conversation was at times totally unintelligible and devoid of meaning,—a circumstance the German writer finds it difficult to explain, though the cause seems to lie as near the surface as possible; for we constantly meet in society men of moderate capacity, who, when wishing to shine, lose themselves in phrases, and talk, if we may so express it, beyond the sphere of their intellect.

Varnhagen von Ense, by far the ablest of all the writers who have described Napoleon from actual observation, gives us the following account of his appearance, manner, and conversation:—

"The long expected Imperial levée was at last announced for the 22d July; and as it was the first after the fire, would, we are told, prove very splendid and magnificent. I had often seen Napoleon at Berlin, and again at Vienna, but always at too great a distance to admit of his appearance making a very distinct impression on my mind. I had also seen him at Prince Schwarzenberg's ball; but associated with the dreadful calamity of that night, the image of the man was to

some extent obscured in my recollection. I shall suppose, therefore, that I first beheld him at this levée, where I had a full and fair view of him, with ample time for observation. The frequent opportunities afterwards afforded me of seeing him at the Tuileries and St Cloud, tended only to perfect and strengthen the impression then made.

"We drove to the Tuileries; and after pressing through a crowd of spectators, guards and attendants, reached the *Salle des Ambassadeurs*. The ludicrous and insulting manner in which so many persons of high rank and station were crowded together in this narrow and ill-decorated den, afforded a frequent subject of jests to the Parisians. Rich uniforms and court-dresses squeezed through the throng, which was augmented by servants in the Imperial livery calling out refreshments, and endangering the nearest bystanders.

"In all directions the conversation was loud and noisy; parties sought out acquaintances, and strove to get additional room and more light. Every thing like calm, dignified and elegant demeanour was totally wanting; the appearance of the scene was altogether unpleasing; you found yourself ill at ease, and waited in a corresponding humour.

"At last came the time for our being admitted to the audience, and on the first announcement, all rushed in confusion towards the door: there was a pushing and pressing of neighbours without the least care or attention. Guards, pages, chamberlains, filled the avenues and anti-chambers; there was everywhere bustling restlessness; the soldiers only acted their part with the quiet calmness that indicated a confidence of knowing what they were about: and this they had learned on the drill-ground and not at Court.

"After the party had formed a half-circle in the Hall of Audience, and crowded into several successive lines, the call of '*l'Empereur!*' announced the Sovereign, and Napoleon entered the apartment. Dressed in a plain blue uniform, and with his small hat under his arm, he advanced heavily towards us. His bearing expressed an inward contest between the wish to attain an object, and a contempt for those from whom it was to be attained. He evidently wished to make a favourable impression, yet seemed hardly to think the necessary effort worth the exertion,—for it must have cost exertion,—as he verily had not the gift from nature. Attention and inattention were therefore mixed up in his manner, and produced an awkward, restless and undignified bearing.

"He first addressed himself to the Austrian embassy, which stood at one extremity of the half-circle; and the unfortunate calamity of the ball gave occasion for some questions and remarks. The Emperor wished to appear as if moved by the misfortune, and made use of some words of sympathy; but this tone did not succeed, and he soon dropt it. Towards the Russian Ambassador, Prince Kourakin, he was already less friendly; and in his farther progress, some thought or appearance must have displeased him, for he burst into a violent passion, and attacked a gentleman present in the most unbecoming manner. The person thus fiercely assailed, and who was so humble in station that I cannot even recollect his name, could give no answer capable of appeasing the irritated sovereign. Every reply seemed to augment the Imperial displeasure: the Emperor constantly demanded new ones, scolded, threatened and for a long time held the poor man in the most painful situation.

"The nearest witnesses of this scene declared afterwards, that there was not the slightest cause for this mighty rage, and that his Majesty had only sought an opportunity to vent his ill humour. It was said, indeed, that he often did so on purpose, and assailed some poor wight merely to keep others in awe and secure submission.

"As he proceeded in his round, he endeavoured to regain his calmness; but his angry mood was still perceptible. He spoke in short, abrupt and broken sentences; uttered the most indifferent things in a quick tone of passion, and seemed angry even when he wished to please. I have rarely, if ever, heard so rude, harsh, and unpolished a voice as Napoleon's.

"His eyes were dark, gloomy and bent downwards, and cast only by occasional side-glances on the persons present. His smile extended no farther than the lips, and left brow and eyes gloomy and unmoved. If he attempted to force them into play, as I have sometimes seen him do, it gave his face a still more distorted appearance. This constrained union of smiles and earnestness had in it something extremely repulsive; and I hardly know what to think of those who could find any thing engaging, friendly, or pleasing, in his countenance. His features, though certainly handsome, had only the hard and rigid beauty of marble, and seemed incapable of expressing the finer feelings of friendliness and sensibility.

"What he said was always, often as I heard him speak, feeble and insignificant as well in import as in language: without wit, spirit, or force; not unfrequently, indeed, low and ludicrous.

"In the '*Notices sur l'Intérieure de la France*,' Faber has given some account of the questions asked by the

Emperor on public occasions, and which have so often been unjustly praised for knowledge and sagacity. I had not then read the book, but found afterwards that it fully confirmed my own observations. His questions frequently resembled the lessons a schoolboy has learned by heart, and repeats over and over again for fear of forgetting them at the proper time and place. This is true to the very letter; and I could mention several instances of it that occasioned a good deal of merriment at the period.

"The puerile efforts Napoleon made to shine in conversation and in the friendly intercourse of society, were at times absolutely ridiculous: in these attempts he was as unsuccessful as, for our misfortune, he was successful in his political undertakings. In fact, he only loved to say unpleasant and offensive things; and even when he wished to act differently, he never rose above absolute insignificance. And I recollect, that at a party at St Cloud, he could say nothing better in speaking to a whole line of ladies, than repeat, for about twenty times, the words, '*Il fait bien chaud*,'—'It is very warm.'

"If he spoke at any length, as indeed he loved to do, he soon lost himself in phrases; crowded facts and arguments fluently but so confusedly together, that all appearance of clearness and distinctness of ideas soon vanished. True it is, that he never lost sight of his object; but *that* he attained by his vast power and military talents, and not by his eloquence. The gifts of conversation, oratory and of a pleasing style and manner in discourse—gifts of which Alexander, Cæsar, and Frederick II. could boast—were foreign to Napoleon, and completely at variance with the nature of his mind, temper and disposition. Wielding no arms of this description, unable to reply or retort, he was extremely

sensitive regarding the speeches of others ; and a single jest, song, or witticism, directed against himself, drove him to absolute fury.

"After the Emperor had withdrawn from the levée, all seemed to breathe more freely, as if relieved from some heavy weight. The voices gradually became loud again, the noisy confusion which had preceded the audience soon returned, and on the very stairs we were descending, bursts of laughter were already heard, raised at the expense of the scene we had just witnessed: its dread and dignity had already vanished.

"Napoleon was powerful at the head of armies, in his military arrangements, and when issuing decrees decisive of the fate of nations. But when he attempted to act in a character that did not, properly speaking, belong to him,—when he attempted to make impressions by his manner and appearance,—to shine in fields that were not his own, he generally placed himself in a very unfavourable light, and rarely imposed on any but the feeble and inexperienced. The recollection entertained of him, and the recreated image drawn of him by his survivors, have awakened far more enthusiasm in his favour than his presence ever could have done."*

Nothing can better illustrate this statement than Napoleon's treatment of Madame de Chevreuse. This lady, one of the ladies of the palace—*Dame du Palais* —was young, lively and handsome ; and, as pretty women occasionally presume on such advantages, a little addicted to raillery. She had, however, very red hair ; and the Emperor, wishing to punish her for some witty remark, and thinking that the obnoxious colour of her ringlets might be a sore point, called attention to it

* Denkwürdigkeiten von Varnhagen von Ense, 4 vols. Manheim, 1837.

at a party, saying, "What shocking red hair you have, Madame de Chevreuse." The lady courtesied deeply, and answered with great quickness,—"I may very possibly have red hair, but your Majesty is the first gentleman who ever told me so." The speech was too good to escape attention, and Madame de Chevreuse was banished to the distance of forty leagues from Paris!

Madame de Staël fared even worse: she had already been exiled under the Consulate, and lived in retirement near Lausanne; but was now obliged to quit her tranquil home and seek shelter in England. The beautiful Madame de Racamier was also banished, merely because she was the friend of the witty exile. Thus did the man who could bring myriads of gallant soldiers to the field, wage an inglorious war against ladies who had only a few clever sayings at command.

As we are here speaking of Napoleon's conduct towards ladies, we cannot do better, perhaps, than give an account of his interview with the Princess Hatzfeld at Berlin,—a trivial incident not in itself worth recording, had it not been celebrated in painting and poetry, and made the foundation of so many ludicrous romances.

The advanced-guard of the French army had entered Berlin *at twelve o'clock on the 24th* of October; and on the 27th, Napoleon held his triumphant entry into the city. A deputation of the municipality, headed by Prince Hatzfeld, the chief commissioner of the province, awaited the conqueror at the Brandenburg gate, for the purpose of presenting him with the keys of the capital. They were not honoured by a look or word; and when they followed to the palace were coldly received, the Emperor telling the Prince that he had no occasion for his services.

On the following morning, Hatzfeld was arrested and conveyed to the main guard; and the Princess, informed by a note of what had happened, hastened to the palace to solicit her husband's release. Through the intercession of Duroc she obtained an audience of the Emperor, and the following is her account of the interview:—

"The moment the door opened, Napoleon came forward to meet her; saying, 'You tremble, Madam; come in, I am not so terrible.' He then inquired concerning her family, and spoke for more than half an hour on totally indifferent subjects. At last she took an opportunity to mention the object of her visit, when he asked whether she knew the cause of her husband's arrest. On her replying in the negative, he rang the bell, desired Berthier to be called, and demanded the Prince's letter. The Marshal had no sooner left the apartment than Napoleon taking the letter, presented it to her, saying, 'You shall now judge for yourself, Madam. If this letter is from your husband, then he is guilty; if it is not from him, he shall receive every satisfaction.' On looking at the letter, the Princess instantly recognised her husband's writing. 'I confess,' she said, 'that it is my husband's writing; but he is known to be a man of honour, and can have written nothing at variance with that character; and if your Majesty will send for him, I am certain that he will be able to justify himself.'

"Napoleon then folding the letter which the Princess had returned to him, gave it back to her, saying, 'There, take the letter; and I have no proof against your husband: he may go home with you; he is free.'" And thus ended a farce which, to secure effect, had commenced with all the threatening symptoms of deep tragedy.

On the 30th of October the following article appeared

in the Berlin papers, both in French and German: the intention being, no doubt, to impress all classes of readers with a high opinion of the victor's clemency:—

"On the 28th inst., Prince Hatzfeld was arrested because he had sent written information to Prince Hohenloe, respecting the movements and position of the French army. The letter containing the information was in the Prince's own hand, and having been intercepted was laid before the Emperor and King.

"The Princess of Hatzfeld hurried immediately to the palace to solicit, on her knees, the pardon of her husband. The Emperor was so good as to show her the Prince's letter, nor could she deny the writing. 'Then judge for yourself, Madam,' said he, 'whether your husband is guilty.' Tears were her only answer; but as his Majesty is generous even to his enemies, he gave the Princess the letter and pardoned the offender."

Unfortunately for this statement, the letter, which we give at length, is not only perfectly harmless in itself; but was actually written *seven hours* before the French entered Berlin, and while Prussian officers were in the town executing the orders of which it treats, and when the Prince was still in the full possession of his Prussian authority, and perfectly entitled, by all the laws ever acknowledged between civilized nations, to correspond with and send the best information in his power to his sovereign, and his sovereign's officers:—

To Major von Knesebeck.

Berlin, 24th October 1806,
5 o'clock, A.M.

Sir,—Lieutenant Braun of the artillery attached to the staff, has just come in, and tells me that he has

directions from you to destroy all the bridges over the Havel. One half of his commission has been executed, the other half Lieutenant Braun thinks impracticable after the information he has received here. I observed to him, that a strong cavalry-patrol had already appeared in Potsdam yesterday, that the Havel bridge there was in possession of the enemy, and that I thought he could fall back, as the other Havel bridges would be of use to us in provisioning Berlin. Lieutenant Braun requested me to inform you of this, and I do so accordingly. Officially I know nothing of the French army, except from a requisition signed d'Aultane, addressed to the magistrates of Potsdam, and which I saw yesterday. The French say their corps is 80,000 strong, others say that it does not amount to 50,000 ; the horses of the cavalry are also described as being in a very exhausted condition.

(Signed) HATZFELD.

P.S.—I beg you will send no answer to this letter.

Of the generosity displayed in forgiving a public functionary for having honestly performed a public duty, it is needless to speak ; but the countless efforts made to disfigure this trivial incident, and make it the foundation on which to raise the fame of Napoleon's magnanimity, are deserving of attention ; for they show the unscrupulous conduct of his adherents, always as ready to devise absolute fiction in favour of their idol, as to libel the guiltless in support of the same cause.

Before dismissing this part of our subject, we shall here give a conversation at length, which we can repeat on the best possible authority, and which is not only curious as showing Napoleon's manner when discoursing with strangers of rank, but his extreme want of tact, as well

as want of knowledge on points of history respecting which he is generally supposed to have been well informed.

During the evening-parties at the Tuileries, and while the Empress Josephine, the Princesses and ladies of her court, were playing at cards, it was usual for Napoleon to enter into conversation with the foreign ambassadors, or strangers presented to him. Thus opening a conversation with a Danish gentleman, who was presented to him soon after his return from Spain in 1809, he inquired what number of troops Denmark usually maintained?

"In case of necessity, we can bring from thirty to forty thousand men into the field," was the reply. NAPOLEON.—"That is far too large an army, and places you in an unnatural position. Surrounded by the sea, pressed in between the Baltic and the Cattegat, Denmark ought to maintain five-and-twenty sail of the line for the protection of her commerce. The mania of standing armies is ruinous to nations, and dangerous to the peace of Europe. But I swear,"—striking his sword at the same time,—"that I will put an end to this mania; and will myself set the example, as soon as my plans are carried into effect. Including the Guards, France shall have only 100,000 men; and the other European states forces proportionate to their income and extent. It is a duty to employ victory for the benefit of mankind." Then turning to a Prussian gentleman present, he continued, "Frederick II. was the originator of the system of standing armies, which has impoverished Europe, and led to so many wars of aggression, like the war of 1756, and the invasion of Champagne which brought Louis XVI. to the scaffold."

As Napoleon seemed to expect an answer, the Prussian replied, "that Frederick the Great was not the only one

who had committed this error, and that Louis XIV. should, perhaps, be looked upon as the first who maintained such armies, and obliged other nations to follow the same example even for their own security."

NAPOLEON.—"Bah! Louis XIV. had only militias and enlisted soldiers, and neither can ruin a state."—The other observed, that in the last campaign of the Spanish Succession War, these forces amounted to nearly 400,000 men; "and if your Majesty," he continued, will permit the remark, the Prussian army consisted, in like manner, only of militias and enlisted foreigners. The native soldier hardly remained two months in the year with his regiment, and returned to his home immediately after the review. The foreigners, enlisted for bounty, were obtained in Switzerland, Germany, and Poland."

NAPOLEON.—"Well, that is something new! I never heard before that the army of Frederick the Great was a militia." Here Berthier was called who, as it was observed, "ought to know something about the matter, as he had seen the reviews of Frederick." Berthier having confirmed the statement, the conversation took another turn, and Napoleon spoke of Frederick's battles. "They have their merit," he said; "but they were fought with equal or superior numbers. I do not know one in which the smaller number defeated the greater."

The Prussian was silent; but as Napoleon looked him full in the face seeming to require an answer, he gave the following reply: "With the exception of the battle of Prague, where both armies were of nearly equal strength, Frederick has still gained several decisive victories, with armies not above one-third the number of his adversaries; as at Soor and Leuthen."

NAPOLEON.—"Leuthen? What battle was that?"

"Frederick," continued the other, "there defeated ninety thousand Austrians with only twenty-eight thousand men, and so completely restored his affairs by the victory, as to regain possession of all Saxony and Silesia."

NAPOLEON.—"Well, that is inconceivable! His enemies must have been asleep. They only required to surround him, and take him prisoner."

"And such, indeed, was their intention," replied the Prussian; "but his bold manœuvres turned the defeat into a victory."

NAPOLEON.—"And what were those bold manœuvres? And how was his army composed? He must have commanded demigods at least?"

"His small army," was the reply, "consisted partly of victorious troops he had brought along with him from the banks of the Saale,"—Rosbach was of course not named,—"and of others who had just sustained a defeat under the walls of Breslau." This answer led to a short description of the battle, at the conclusion of which, Napoleon said, "Well, the centre and right wing of the Austrians must have been asleep, otherwise, I do not see how it could have happened. And what were the results of the victory?"

"Forty thousand prisoners, two hundred pieces of artillery, the capture of Breslau, with a garrison of fifteen thousand men, and the recovery of Saxony and Silesia."

NAPOLEON.—"Well, that is a splendid result with twenty-eight thousand men. Where is a good account of the battle to be found?"

"In Lloyd, in Tempelhof, and Guibert; and there are yet many persons living who were present in the action, and can bear evidence to the truth of the fact."

Napoleon.—"Lloyd cannot be quoted; for the English are bad tacticians: their Marlborough would have effected nothing without the Dutch and Germans. Guibert is a pedant and a bad Frenchman, who has underrated his countrymen on purpose to exalt Frederick II."

"Sire," answered the Prussian, "I can hardly consider Guibert as a bad Frenchman: in all his writings, even in his panegyric of Frederick, he seems the reverse; but he looked upon Frederick as the property of all times and nations, even of mankind at large, whose very ornament he thought him destined to prove by his greatness, character and genius."

Napoleon smiled, and asked in the most friendly manner what German author contained the best account of the battle. Inquiringly, he named Johannes Müller. On Archenholz' description being mentioned as truly elegant, he immediately desired Berthier to obtain him a translation of it.

Berthier, who had never heard of Archenholz in his life, requested the Prussian to get him a copy of the book, which the latter promised to send, together with a translation of the passage in question. On expressing his surprise that the Emperor should not be acquainted with the most brilliant of Frederick's battles, when it appeared from occasional expressions that he had actually studied the King's campaigns, the Marshal observed that he might possibly have read something about them; but had never had time to study them, adding, "a little jealousy may also be mixed up with the matter."

The translation was soon finished and delivered; and at the very next *cercle*, Napoleon thus resumed the conversation:—"I have read," he said, "the translation of

the account of the battle of Leuthen with great interest: it is extremely well written; far better than Guibert. The talent displayed by Frederick stamps him as our master,—the master of all of us. But what would he have done had he lost the battle? I have shuddered at the thought of seeing so great a character ruined. Has he left us any proof of resolution at the moment of his greatest distress?"

"Certainly, after the defeats of Hochkirch and Kunnersdorff." Napoleon having listened attentively to the accounts of the battles, went on thus:—

"And what were those old fools"—*ces ganaches*—"of Austrian and Russian generals about; were they asleep, or had they orders to spare him?"

"It is also possible that so much courage, firmness and resolution, inspired them with respect."

NAPOLEON.—"But what would he have done, had he been surrounded and deprived of all means of safety? Would he have put an end to his life by poison, as it is generally said he intended?"

"Such is the universal belief in our country, and many of those who approached him, affirm that he always carried opium about his person. The letter he wrote to his sister, the Margravine of Bareuth, those to Voltaire and to D'Argens, place his intention of ending so glorious a life by a voluntary death almost beyond a doubt." The speaker concluded his remarks by reciting the well-known lines addressed by the King to Voltaire, shortly before the saving battle of Rosbach.

"*Pour moi menacé du naufrage,*
Je dois en affrontant l'orage
Penser, vivre ou mourir en Roi."

NAPOLEON.—"He was right, he was right. It would

be dastardly indeed to live like a wretch,—*comme un pleutre,*—after having once attained to the highest pinnacle of fame."

It would be difficult, in the whole range of history, to find another conversation in which so many passages recoil against the principal speaker himself. The pretended critiques on Frederick's campaigns, published in the St Helena Memoirs, are shown to rest on a very doubtful foundation of knowledge. Lloyd, the best historian of the Seven Years' War, and the ablest tactician of modern times, is declared to be unworthy of credit; the English, Napoleon's own conquerors, are denounced as incapable tacticians, and the man who died a querulous captive at St Helena tells us, that a dastard only would survive after falling from the highest pinnacle of fame.

If we can say little for Napoleon's conversation, as little can we say for his style of composition, highly as it has been admired. To us the style of the Imperial Bulletins and proclamations always appeared that of a political comedy; inflated declamation without dignity or logic; often descending indeed to absolute vulgarity. It may have passed upon the Jacobins converted to Counts and Barons, may have imposed upon the unthinking; but can never be received by history as proof of any ability on the part of its author. The vaunted proclamation addressed to his army before the battle of the Pyramids, —"Soldiers, from the summit of yonder monuments, forty ages look down upon you,"—is the shortest and most harmless specimen of this style which we are able to quote. An explanation of its meaning or beauty will of course not be expected from us.

CHAPTER IV.

NAPOLEON'S CLAIMS TO HIGH MILITARY GENIUS CONSIDERED: HIS LIBERALITY IN REWARDING THE TROOPS, BUT WANT OF INSIGHT INTO CHARACTER: HAS FOLLOWERS AND PARTISANS, BUT FEW OR NO FRIENDS: HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE: SUMMARY OF CHARACTER: CONCLUSION.

We have already stated our conviction that Napoleon was indebted to the success of his arms, as well for power and empire, as for his legislative reputation; and must now try how far the foundation will support any part of the brilliant superstructure it is usually made to bear.

The world at large are easily dazzled by military success, and the splendid triumphs of Napoleon's early campaigns, his long unbroken career of victory, seemed almost to justify the multitude, who judge only from results, in ascribing to him the highest order of military talents. When reverses came in their turn, opinion was already formed in his favour; and the world are slow to change an opinion, however extravagant, when once established: men do not like to avow that they have been mistaken, and though ready to judge by results when these tell in favour of their views, are not easily made to strike an impartial balance when results tell both ways. Had it been otherwise, Moscow and

Leipzig must have been weighed against Lodi and Marengo; Laon and Waterloo against Austerlitz and Jena: a process which would have left "the grand result in yon lone Isle," to throw the last decisive weight into the scale.

The historian is not, however, allowed to judge by results alone, for in all ages very ordinary commanders have gained battles; and though it would be idle to estimate the skill of commanders by any pedantic rules of martinet tactitians, or line-and-compass strategists, there are plain and intelligible principles according to which all who are acquainted with history can form a fair estimate of the talents displayed by those who have been long at the head of armies. A great commander will effect great things with comparatively small means, and will conduct operations, achieve victory with the smallest possible loss and least suffering to the troops under his orders. Such a commander will know, like Hannibal, how to strike after enticing his adversaries into the fatal defiles of Thrasymene; but like the great Carthaginian, will also know how to extricate an army from peril, and foil an enemy anticipating certain triumph on the Casilian hills. And from an absolute sovereign possessing great military genius, some improvement in the science of tactics, the very foundation of the whole science of war, will surely be expected.

But in the history of Napoleon we find none of these proofs of military skill, and only find victories gained and conquests achieved by fully adequate means. The Revolution had, as we have seen, unshackled all the energies of the country, already the most powerful on the Continent, and placed the lives and properties of the people completely at the disposal of Government. The conscription sent the best men of France by

myriads into the ranks of the army; rapid promotion, and the enthusiasm of fancied freedom, animated the first Republican soldiers; and at a later period, crowns, wealth, domains, principalities—the spoils of conquered provinces, rewarded the victors, and became incitements to daring deeds. By the aid of revolutionary power, Robespierre and his Committee of Public Safety sent, according to Capefigue, fourteen armies into the field, and from 1811 to 1813, Napoleon levied more than 1,100,000 conscripts in France alone, independently of those raised for his service in Italy and in the States of the Rhenish Confederation!—and all this at a period when civilisation had long acted the pioneer in Europe, made roads, and extended cultivation, and thus facilitated the movements of large armies to an extent never known in earlier times. To maintain, that conquest achieved over the continental armies of the period, by aid of the vast revolutionary means specified, must of itself furnish proof of military talent and genius,—is like maintaining that the commander of a steam vessel, making by aid of steam an easy course against the wind, must be a greater navigator, a man of greater genius, than the commanders of the many sailing vessels he may beat and outstrip in his course, however skilfully the latter may be working their way against the swelling breeze; every commander of a sloop being, perhaps, a better seaman than the master of the leviathan steamer. In both cases the reasoning will be the same: in the first, we overlook the giant strength which the Revolution imparted to the rulers of France, whether Republican or Imperial; in the second, we disregard the power of steam: feats of logic, suited only to the worshippers of Napoleon.

What, indeed, could the old established Continental

governments, fettered as the most despotic were by the laws which protected persons and property, oppose to the tremendous force of the Revolution? Inferior armies of well-powdered and well-buttoned soldiers, taken mostly from the refuse of the German population, ruled by a cruel and degrading system of discipline; three-halfpence a day, without the slightest prospect of ever improving their condition, being their brightest incentive to meet wounds, death and mutilation. That these men fought so bravely, as they certainly did on many occasions, could result solely from the natural bravery of the people; but such exertions required to be encouraged, and they were not. In Austria, the mass of the subaltern officers were not even eligible to the command of companies; and the higher ranks of the army were filled exclusively by members of the higher orders of the aristocracy. When, however, the necessity of self-defence obliged the other States of Europe to introduce the French conscription, and make Europe one vast drill-ground, though without the power of plundering provinces and giving French reward, there was a speedy termination to the brilliant lustre of French victories. The advantages gained by Napoleon at Wagram, Smolensk and Borodino, were in no proportion to the superiority of his forces; and of Lützen and Bautzen, Clausewitz tells us that there was not a man present who did not feel confident, that with equal numbers the Allies would have been victorious. Of the disasters which followed in rapid succession, it is needless to speak; for military annals furnish no parallel to the retreat from Moscow, the rout of the Bridge of Leipzig, and the flight from Waterloo.

We still trace on the historic page the admirable dispositions which gave victory to the great conquerors

of Leuctra, Arbela, Trebia, and Thrasymene. The tactical improvements of Gustavus Adolphus, which enabled that great soldier to challenge, at the head of sixteen thousand well-trained Swedes, the whole power of the House of Austria, and of Catholic Germany, are perfectly clear and intelligible; we perceive, at the first glance, the decided advantage they give his troops over the unwieldy bands they had to encounter. The skill which enabled Frederick II. to defeat at Rosbach, Leuthen, &c., &c., vastly superior armies, composed of troops as brave and as well disciplined as his own, is equally plain and perceptible; but when we come to examine the military actions of Napoleon, we must be satisfied with results; and these, as we have seen, tell both ways. For proofs of genius we must be content to receive the rhapsodies of French historians; for on no occasion do we find his army placed to particular advantage in a battle-field; we see only direct attacks unsupported by skilful dispositions, and trusted entirely to the efficiency of the troops. Nor was anything done to improve the science of tactics, the very foundation of the whole art of war. Alexander, Cæsar, Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII., and Frederick, all made such improvements: Napoleon made none whatever: the French *Réglement* of 1792 remained in force till 1825, and was at no time supposed to have attained absolute perfection.

That Napoleon may have been a greater General than Mack, Wurmser, Benningsen, the Duke of Brunswick and Melas, is very possible; but proves nothing, unless it can be shown that these were really great and skilful commanders. So far, however, from this being the case, Massenbach, Berenhorst, Müller, Gentz and Clausewitz, men of the highest genius, tell us that the first named four were totally unfit to command armies; and, except

in the instance of Benningsen, the evidence was recorded against them, in letters and private journals written before the disasters they experienced had enabled the authors quoted to judge after the facts.

But we have stronger proof still to bring forward. There is nothing in the great victories of Napoleon that may not be fairly ascribed to the gallantry and efficiency of the troops: for the French armies were generally superior in numbers, and in the early campaigns of a very superior composition, and, impelled by enthusiastic sentiments, which, whether ill or well-founded, signifies little, gave them the most decided advantage over their very sober adversaries. With only equal generalship, the chances of victory would have been altogether in their favour; and it is allowable, therefore, to give them the merit of success. On following the inquiry farther, we are obliged to do so, because we find the previous victor guilty of conduct totally incompatible with talents of any kind.

In the field, a General may possibly strike too far to the right or too far to the left; he may mistake an enemy's intention, be deceived regarding the strength of a hostile army, and history will rarely be able, or willing even to lay stress on such errors; but there are others of a nature that cannot possibly be overlooked, and which no previous success can neutralize. The mere operations of war are in themselves extremely simple—nothing can be more so: it is the tremendous friction, the wearing away of the military machine, in effecting even the simplest of these simple movements, that occasions the vast difficulty commanders have to overcome and contend with. In the German and Italian campaigns, ready conscriptions and requisitions had in a great measure relieved Napoleon and his Marshals from the weight of this

difficulty; but every march rendered its existence and threatening danger evident; and bearing this in view, we cannot see how a man of military talents and foresight could undertake the expedition to distant Moscow, and conduct it in the manner which led to the disaster that overwhelmed the French.

As little can we understand how a great commander could ruin an army in 1813 without striking a blow for victory, which could alone save him from destruction; especially so when opportunities presented themselves, as after the battle of Dresden, and again on the Eagle's Nest in Saxony. We cannot understand how a man of great military talent could fight the battle of Leipzig on the 18th October, against nearly three hundred thousand men, after having been foiled by two hundred thousand on the 16th; and that, too, without having secured a safe or even an open line of retreat; and when, as we have seen, success could no longer effect the real objects of victory.

Nor does the boasted campaign of 1814 redeem the other two, for we cannot believe that a great commander, a judge of human character, would have desisted from the pursuit of the active and indefatigable Blücher, to turn upon the timid, slow, and almost stationary Schwarzenberg. Still less can we comprehend how a man of ability, knowing the vast influence Paris exercises over France, could leave that capital exposed to the attack of 100,000 men commanded by Blücher, so recently victorious at Laon, and attempt to intimidate such an adversary by a march towards the frontier; the most puerile project ever perhaps formed at the head of an army. A great commander, a man of high energy and daring, would have been present in Paris when the fate of his throne was decided beneath its walls; in such a

case, the King's name is a "tower of strength," which he might have lent his threatened capital instead of shedding unmanly tears when informed of its fall.

During both these campaigns, the Allied Armies were torn by political and military jealousies, dissensions and by the divergent views of princes, commanders, generals and cabinet ministers, to an extent that not only retarded all their movements; but threatened at times to paralyze their efforts altogether. Of this Napoleon could not possibly be ignorant, as it resulted, in some measure at least, from the very composition of the multitudinous host, and from the manner in which it was commanded; for where Kings and Emperors were present with their troops, a simple Field-Marshal could hardly have a very firm hold of the reins of authority: and in fact, the Allied Army never had a supreme and absolute leader. But on no occasion was Napoleon equal to avail himself of the great advantage these jealousies and the want of unity of command on the part of his enemies gave him; he appears, on the contrary, to have been, from first to last, as incapable of forming a just estimate of his own position, as of the very different characters of the leaders to whom he was opposed. The most promising opportunities for striking were lost in consequence; and blows were attempted to be dealt, where no fair chance of success could be discovered.

The brief campaign of 1815 furnishes instances of equally grave errors; and all of a nature to prevent our awarding the fame of military skill to the commander by whom they were committed. Fortune, that occasioned the absence of Bülow's corps, favoured Napoleon on the 16th, and enabled him to press back the Prussians from Ligny. But so little did the victors know how

to benefit by the success, that all traces of the retiring enemy were already lost on the morning of the 17th, when the extravagant idea was immediately nourished, that Blücher—the Blücher of the Katzbach, Wartenburg, Möckern and Laon—would allow a mere check to drive him altogether from the theatre of war; that such a man would resign his communication with the British, forsake the contest, and with at least 80,000 men still under his command, fly from Marshal Grouchy, who had little more than a third of that number!

And when the result of these glaring errors appeared at last in forms not to be mistaken, when the hour of defeat struck on the plains of Waterloo, when a difficult retreat, an escape from total rout and ruin, was all that the best efforts of the Guard could possibly secure for the vanquished; even then, we find a total want of ability, character, and we might say of ordinary courage, displayed: for we find that last Reserve, the only hope of the army, hurled into the open gulf of destruction by a leader who dared not even share the fate of the brave.

There is one quality essentially valuable to commanders, which Napoleon possessed, however, in an eminent degree, and which he had also the means of exercising to a great extent. He was liberal in rewarding officers and soldiers; and though these rewards were generally granted at the expense of conquered provinces, whether in lands, pensions, or contributions, they still produced the desired effect; they encouraged to daring deeds, and attached the rewarded to the open-handed sovereign, who forgot not the humblest soldier in the ranks. This easy species of liberality gave him a decided advantage over all his enemies, none of whom could resort to similar means, and was certainly one of the main causes of his success; for even those who were over-

looked on one occasion, expected to be more fortunate on another.

In bestowing rewards in the junior ranks, Napoleon was necessarily guided by the opinion of Colonels and Generals, for his personal acquaintance could not extend to the soldiers and regimental officers of his numerous army: so that the nature of the selections come not within our present inquiry. And though, in granting promotion and scattering pensions and decorations with a liberal hand among Generals and inferior officers, he must often have rewarded officers of the highest merit—because there were, and always will be, numbers of such officers in all ranks of a French army—there is nothing to show that he knew how to select and call forth merit, or that he ever brought forward individuals of very distinguished talents. Whether he was, like so many other soldiers, jealous of superior ability, we have no means of knowing: his boundless vanity would rather encourage this belief: for vanity, which might at first seem a shield against envy, tends only to augment the despicable weakness. His want of insight into character is as plainly shown by the conduct of the persons who surrounded him, as his low opinion of human intellect is displayed in the St Helena Memoirs: for it was only by ascribing to his readers a total want of judgment, that he could fail to see that these wretched compounds of falsehood and folly, written with a view to enhance him in the estimation of the world, would in fact injure his fame and reputation.

The time has long gone by when it was the fashion to look upon the French Marshals as men of brilliant military genius: they were mostly men of very ordinary talents, but endowed with daring and energy, and rendered confident by the success of the first Revolution-

ary campaigns ; and Napoleon already found the greater number at the head of armies when he attained to power. The promotion of such men as Murat, Marmont, Davoust, Junot and Savary, the principal individuals he raised from subaltern to high military rank, can furnish but indifferent proofs of his penetration and sagacity. The first was never considered a man of either talent or character, and abandoned his brother-in-law as soon as the tide took a decided turn against him: the second was not distinguished in the field, but was accused of betraying or causing the downfall of his benefactor ; and though the main charge is altogether false, he was the first to forsake his sovereign in the hour of need. The brutal Davoust, though an able soldier perhaps, injured his patron as much by the ruthless infamy of his conduct, as he aided him by his ability in the field ; and gave full proof of his worth after the battle of Waterloo, when, as we have seen, he offered to arrest his fallen sovereign even with his own blood-stained hands. Of the rude and vulgar Junot it is needless to speak ; and even Napoleon's friends will hardly wish him to shine by the reflection of Savary's merit.

Nor have we any reason to suppose that more judgment was displayed in selecting the civil functionaries of the empire. We mean, of course, ministers and high officers of state who stood near the sovereign ; for among the thousands of persons employed under the Imperial government, the mere hand of chance must, in a country like France, have placed multitudes of distinguished individuals in situations of secondary or inferior rank. But of these we have no right to speak, and must confine ourselves to those specially appointed by Napoleon himself ; and long as the list certainly is, it does not contain a single name that is now associated with any

degree of talent or merit. Many were successful in their vocations; and diplomacy required so little skill in the rear of victorious armies, that even Maret and Champany could shine as ministers of foreign affairs: and under a government that allowed not a single word of dissent or opposition, it was comparatively easy to administer the different departments of the State.

Talleyrand and Fouché are the only members of the Imperial government that retain any reputation in public recollection: both were in the ministry when Napoleon attained supreme power, and the treatment they experienced at his hands confirms the assertion that the modern Charlemagne was endowed with little insight into human character. He first employed and then dismissed them; and though they were neither of them looked upon as men of high feeling or principle likely to forget an injury, he not only consulted them on important affairs at the very time when he suspected their treachery, but placed them at last in the only positions in which such men could become formidable. The consequence was, that Talleyrand effected his deposition in 1814, and Fouché forced him to resign in 1815! The disgraceful scenes acted at Fontainbleau and Orleans, when ministers, dignitaries, functionaries of all grades, down even to menial servants, vied with each other in plundering and forsaking a master and sovereign who had at least been liberal with his gifts, show how unfortunate had been his selections, and that he had surrounded himself only by men of the lowest caste:

> "Such still to guilt just Alla sends,
> Slaves, tools, accomplices—no friends."

A speech ascribed to Marshal Soult, and never, as far as we know, disavowed by him, seems to furnish

strong evidence of the truth of the last line here quoted. Conversing about Napoleon with a party in his own *salon*, the Marshal is reported to have made use of the following words :—"How can you suppose that we were attached to that man? Look at the expedition to India he proposed to undertake if he had succeeded in Russia. We were all to have been sacrificed to his insatiable ambition."*

We may perhaps be told that Napoleon, if not a good judge of individual character, understood the French, and knew how to flatter their vanity and turn it to account. Such praise might, no doubt, become an ordinary mountebank or juggler, but cannot be very complimentary to a sovereign who long held the most absolute sway over a nation ever exercised perhaps by sceptred hand. Had such a ruler deserved to fill his high station, we should have heard that he tried to suppress the mischievous vanity and to elevate the virtue of his people; but to this effect not a single solitary word can be uttered in favour of Napoleon. Greatly the reverse indeed is the case; for he not only gratified the vain glory of the French, but substituted for the chivalrous

* Annales historiques et philosophiques de la Restauration. Par D'Esquiron de St Agnau. Paris, 1838.

In regard to the invasion of India here mentioned, there is certainly good ground for believing that the extravagant project was actually in contemplation. Gagern relates a long conversation he held with General Sebastiani on the subject, when the latter halted at his *château* on the way to join the Grand Army, preparing for the Russian campaign. In the second edition of his book, Odeleben also quotes a speech uttered by one of the Emperor's confidential servants, which tends to confirm the same view. And the Austrian Military Journal for 1824 tells us, on the best authority, that a report was generally circulated through the French army on the evening before the battle of Borodino, announcing peace, an alliance with Russia, and a joint invasion of British India, as certain results of next day's anticipated victory.

feeling which had formerly distinguished their love of military renown, a selfish craving for spoil, which the plunder of so many conquered provinces engendered in the bosom of the nation, and which when checked by reverses recoiled upon himself.

As long as his unprincipled wars filled the coffers of the state, drained Continental Europe of its wealth for the benefit of France, and enriched hordes of civil and military functionaries, who often squandered their ill-acquired wealth as recklessly in France as it had been recklessly gained by the oppression of foreign countries; as long as this system lasted Napoleon had numerous supporters, and enjoyed the description of popularity which was sufficient for his purpose. But no sooner had military reverses deprived him of the means of gratifying the craving selfishness he had fostered, than he was left alone in the arena. While his system of plunder and extortion could be upheld, he found many and ready supporters, but when that fell on the invasion of France, he too was allowed to fall. Not a voluntary arm was raised in his defence, nor was a single particle of the gold he had so liberally squandered to gratify the rapacity he had awakened, willingly tendered to uphold his sinking fortunes. He had rested his throne on selfishness and the power of corruption, and had no hold whatever on the better feelings of the nation. No active patriotism, none of the gallant loyalty that so readily gathers round a throne in any degree worthily occupied, was called forth in his favour; none stood forward in his cause as the champion of honour, virtue and national improvement; none offered to uphold him as the instructor and benefactor of his people, as the friend of the poor, as the sovereign who had tried honestly to improve their condition and alleviate their sufferings. A valiant

conscription-raised army fought to the last with national and characteristic bravery in his cause; but when their efforts proved unavailing, there was not, in a great and enlightened nation, the least particle of generous sympathy expressed for Napoleon Bonaparte: so far from it indeed, that he had no sooner ceased to reign, than he was followed by the insulting reproaches of his former subjects, down to the very shores of the empire over which he had so long held sway!

Nor was this feeling confined to France alone: it extended to every country over which the pestilential air of his influence had been breathed. Many sovereigns were, from interested motives, his allies; but popular indignation was everywhere too strong for princely ambition; and all these interested allies were forced to turn their arms against him. Popular indignation struck down the oppressor of nations; struck down the man who scorned all popular feeling, and added insult to the chains he imposed upon the vanquished; and whose rule was tending to make rude military obedience a sufficient substitute for every virtue honoured upon earth, or enjoined from on high.

That Napoleon found hosts of followers and adherents during his reign, as well as zealous champions after his fall, need not surprise us. A government so powerful and widely extended as the Imperial Government of France, so unscrupulous in its means, so lavish of property acquired by violence; a government that covered a great portion of Europe with civil and military functionaries, enriching themselves by exercising delegated authority in full accordance with the principles of their superiors, could hardly fail to have fierce and numerous advocates.

In France, an entire generation, reared amid the

wild scenes of the Revolution, embued with all its nefarious doctrines of foreign conquest, became ready converts to the principle, that the will of the Emperor was a rule of ethics which foreign States could not resist without deviating from some political obligation that fully justified any severity the head of the Grand Empire might exercise against them! When such notions prevailed, and when splendid rewards were to be acquired, it was certain that thousands of active and daring men would be ready to strike for fame and fortune at any risk; while the mass, receiving as usual the opinion most loudly expressed as the just one—especially when no contradiction was tolerated—willingly followed fortune's banner, as the banner of true and honest patriotism. Those who drew prizes in the stormy lottery of the times, were bound to defend the author of the system under which they had prospered: those who failed, who saw their prospects blighted, or were arrested in mid career by the fall of the empire, were naturally more inclined to charge their want of success on what they termed the injustice of the Allies, than to the worthless cause in which they had embarked. And hence the torrents of low abuse heaped upon the Allied armies, Generals, Governments and Ministers—heaped upon all who had taken part against Napoleon, whether in the field or in the Cabinet.

In conquered countries also, Napoleon found champions: for whoever aided the cause was certain to share in the spoil. Contractors, Jews, usurers, spies, forgers, smugglers, gathered in all quarters round the French authorities and invading armies; fattened on the spoils of oppressed individuals and plundered provinces, and chanted loud pæans in praise of the man who encouraged their noble pursuits.

The Revolution had abolished all distinction of rank ; during the Consulate and first years of the Empire, there existed no hereditary nobility : and as the mass of those who in conquered countries joined the French cause belonged to the very dregs of the democracy, Napoleon was gradually proclaimed the champion of the people ; till the most despotic ruler who had ever filled a throne in modern times, the most slavish worshipper of aristocracy—the man who scorned all popular rights, feelings, and sympathies, trampled democracy to the very dust, and valued the people only as they served to fill the ranks of his army—became at last the vaunted ideal of modern liberalism ! In France, the most ardent worshippers of his despotism being necessarily hostile to the Bourbon government, appeared after his fall as the loudest champions of popular rights : a metamorphosis more intelligible than consistent.

The causes which obtained so many partisans for him in England, though of a different nature, are equally evident.

The extent to which violent party-spirit carried its votaries during the war is well known. The Whigs, Liberals, Economists, and other opposers of government, regardless of the injurious effects certain to result from their conduct, prophesied defeat and the failure of all the ministerial plans for arresting the progress of Napoleon, who was lauded as a ruler of the highest genius, and a soldier of such splendid talents, as to render vain and futile all our feeble attempts to cope with his power. As the enemy of the governing party, he became in some measure the ally of the opposition ; and his praise thus lavishly sounded by a large and influential portion of the press, was gradually believed to be deserved ; especially as the opposite party only replied to these extra-

vagant panegyrics, by low railing and foolish tales of terror, that tended to strengthen the cause of their adversaries. And when at last the "Corsican Ogre" of the Tories, the "Man of resplendent genius" of the Whigs, was defeated and driven from his throne, then both parties readily joined to proclaim his merit: the former to enhance the glory acquired by his overthrow; the latter to retain at least the appearance of consistency, after events had completely falsified their unpatriotic prophecies.

The generous feeling of the nation was also averse to triumph over the fallen, and taunt a vanquished enemy with former wrongs. There was something like a noble forgiveness of injuries in sounding only the praise without adverting to the crimes of our former adversary, that suited the superficial liberality so much in vogue. It did not strike these liberal parties, or did not suit them to recollect, that Napoleon was an historical character, whose actions and conduct could not be falsified without a direct offence to all efforts made by history in the cause of truth and honour.

Before concluding, we must here say a few words of Napoleon's general manner and appearances. In stature he was below the middle size, and when he first appeared in public life was extremely thin, had a slight ungraceful stoop, but was well formed. His hair was black, and as he wore it hanging in Republican fashion over his brows and down the sides of his face, it deepened the tinge of his complexion, which was at this time extremely sallow, but improved with his fortunes. As he advanced in years, he became very corpulent, his neck shortened, his head sank upon his chest, and his stomach projected; and his appearance was altogether so clumsy and unprepossessing, that, as we know from good autho-

rity, it made the most unfavourable impression on Marie Louise at their first meeting. His eyes were grey without any particular expression; the eye-brows were slight, and the eye-bones, which when strongly marked give so much character to the countenance, were feebly formed.

Judging from busts and portraits, the nose must have been very fine; but the busts of Dennecker and Canova, the best probably because the least flattered, show a rude and coarse expression round the chin. It is asserted by all historians, and we repeat the statement accordingly, that his smile was extremely winning and almost irresistible. Whether it is not usual to say the same thing of the smiles of all very powerful princes, we shall not stop to inquire; but do not comprehend how the lips shown on the mask taken after death could ever be forced into an agreeable smile.

> "He who has bent him o'er the dead,
> Ere the first day of death has fled,"

must know how calm, passionless, and unchanged every feature remains, and how clearly every trait of character seems depicted in the settled and tranquil lines of the countenance. At all events, death never flatters; and the most celebrated artists who have taken likenesses of Napoleon, have evidently vied with each other in flattering him, and have only given us their idealized representations of the "Man of Destiny." While all who have paid the slightest attention to the arts know how easy it is, both in sculpture and painting, to retain a certain degree of likeness, while the countenance is heightened and even ennobled.

Though Napoleon often behaved with rude and vulgar

violence towards inferiors, his general deportment seems to have been calm and composed, but destitute of dignity. By ladies, who are the best judges in such matters, he was considered extremely deficient in good manners, awkward, inelegant and totally destitute of the graces of conversation. "He spoke," says General Minutoli, who, from his rank, station, and known ability, must be looked upon as good authority, "in short and broken sentences, uttered in a harsh and hard tone; in what may be called the lapidary style. His voice was rough, and often accompanied by a hoarse kind of laugh, which formed in the throat, and frequently impeded the sound of the words, and rendered them unintelligible. Foreign terms were occasionally observed in his conversation, and he too often resorted to the use of the lowest and most vulgar guard-room expressions."*

That an endless variety of old sayings, weak, puerile, and common-place remarks, have been brought forward and ascribed as clever, and brilliant and witty speeches, to Napoleon, may well be believed; such efforts are rarely wanting on behalf of the wealthy and the powerful. But though they sometimes impose upon the unwary, as they have done occasionally in favour of Napoleon, it is certain that not a single brilliant speech, witty saying, or striking remark, can be quoted on sufficient authority, as having been made by this "Man of Destiny."

At levées, and on public occasions, the Emperor probably acted his part as well as others, though we know from Varnhagen von Ense, who saw him when at the height of his power, and from Dr Henry, who was

* Friedrich und Napoleon eine Parallele. Von General Lieut. von Minutoli. Berlin, 1840.

presented to him at St Helena, that even on such occasions he could not divest himself of the sinister expression stamped upon his features. It is greatly to be regretted, however, that most of the writers who had opportunities of describing Napoleon from personal observation and intercourse, should have been either violent partizans, or men of such moderate talents as to deprive their testimony of all historical value.

It has occasionally been asked, whether Napoleon, who acknowledged himself a Mahometan in Egypt, and died a Catholic "in the faith of his fathers," ever had any fixed religious principles or opinions. We think that he never had, and that he was as little of a Mahometan in the East as a Catholic in the West: for it is impossible to conceive a heart over which religion holds the slightest sway, prompting to the many deeds of violence charged against Napoleon. And though the religious may err, though they have often done so most grievously, their very errors lean to virtue's side, and can never be carried to absolute excess when by misfortune they take a faulty direction.

As little do we believe that Napoleon was tinged with superstition, as some have asserted. He possessed neither the lofty feeling which prompts or has prompted men of great imaginative power to fancy their destiny of so high a character as to be linked to the great machinery of the universe, or connected with beings of a superior order by ties lying beyond the circle of human knowledge or observation. Nor was he one of the feeble and trembling class who believe in idle omens, and start at shadows which the recollection of infancy tales interprets into signs of fear and danger. He was, on the contrary, as far below the first as above the second class; was by mind and feeling, as well as by the opinion—

and, we are sorry to say, by the very fashion—of his time, a mere materialist; as incapable of the spirit-soaring aspirations which in fancy could lift him above the dross of earth, as free from the weakness which makes the Corsican peasant dread the gaze of the evil eye, and the boldest warrior of the East tremble at the name of Gouls and Vampires.

And what, let us now ask, is the estimate we are bound to form of his talents and character, supposing we have established the case here so briefly recapitulated? Do the actions he performed, does the high station he attained, necessarily imply the possession of talents and genius; or are such fortunes fully compatible with very ordinary abilities when the wild times and mighty swell of events that marked the period of his rise are taken into account? If we say that his splendid and long-continued success does imply the possession of corresponding genius, then we take results for our only proofs, having, in fact, no others. And this, though at all times an unsatisfactory mode of reasoning, is doubly so here; for, as we have seen, results tell both ways: they tell as much against Napoleon as in his favour, and leave us in the utter impossibility of reconciling the conduct which led to his fall with the possession of either character or ability.

We can well understand that, in wildly agitated times, such as those that followed on the overthrow of the French monarchy, when the fiercest passions of men were unshackled even by ruling authorities, a successful commander should attain supreme power, and retain it for years, by the very means through which it had been acquired: history is full of such instances. But we cannot understand how a man of great talents could have committed the errors that led to Napoleon's over-

throw, nor how a man of high and decided character could have acted as he acted in the hour of adversity.

Often, as we have said, fierce, rude and overbearing in prosperity, we find him tame under reverses, and striving to shelter the littleness of exposed pretensions under exterior composure, and the absurd plea "that he did not wish to have his illusions dispelled." Lower still in the depths of adversity, he acts a still lower part; crouching beneath the threats of despised demagogues, descending from his throne at their mere bidding, choosing to live a slave rather than die a king, and ending a career that might have been the brightest on the records of time, by the ignoble conduct displayed at St Helena.

Tried by his own writings and by the description his friends have furnished, Napoleon appears to the utmost disadvantage on his rock of exile. "Greatness," says Schiller, "may be shown in prosperity, but it is only in adversity that the highest elevation of character can be displayed." And had the ex-Emperor possessed one particle of this elevation of character, could his narrow mind have formed even a conception of its brightness, we should have had a different tale to tell of his conduct at St Helena. We should then have seen the high of heart and feeling bearing misfortune with the proud, calm and lofty dignity becoming the victor of so many nations. Such a man would not have engaged in petty quarrels upon petty things with the governor of an island, a subordinate officer, obliged to conform to the orders of his superiors; he would not have condescended to be acquainted with such details, left their settlement to his inferiors; and, proudly resting on his name, fame, and glory, would have been far above feeling annoyance

from the inspection of sentinels and the visits of an orderly officer.

Instead of the pettish and morose temper displayed on every occasion, he would have shown himself polite, affable and friendly to all; and would have acknowledged the governor's intended civilities, even when protesting against his official measures. And had such a protest been thought necessary, it would have been made in the face of day, addressed to the Princes of Europe and to the British nation, against the conduct of their government; and would not have been found in wretched libels circulated against an officer honestly discharging a painful duty with every degree of courtesy consistent with the safe custody of the prisoner.*

* When Sir Hudson Lowe was Quartermaster-General to the forces serving in Belgium, during the period that intervened between the first peace of Paris and Napoleon's landing from Elba, the present writer, then on the Quartermaster-General's Staff, but stationed at a distance from head-quarters, was occasionally called upon to communicate with the chief of the department. He can, therefore, speak from some personal knowledge of Sir Hudson, and is bound to say that he always found him courteous in manner, frank and obliging in conduct; and never perceived any thing in his deportment which could possibly justify the unworthy attacks directed against him.

As a trivial anecdote in favour of this much libelled individual, we may mention, that when the officers of the Quartermaster-General's Staff were employed in sketching various parts of country, at the period mentioned, chance led Sir Hudson himself to the ground on which the battle of Waterloo was afterwards fought. He was instantly struck with the advantages the position would afford to an army intending to fight a battle for the protection of Brussels: he remained a long time on the field, examined it minutely, and, as he told the writer of this Memoir, recommended that it should be fortified. No renewal of hostilities was then anticipated, and the project necessarily fell to the ground; though after-events proved the vast benefit that might have been derived from a few simple redoubts.

Had we been describing the exile of a great man, we should probably have told that he was engaged in faithfully recording the world-shaking events in which he had been a leading actor; in laying bare the main springs of his conduct, readily confessing his own faults and errors, but claiming, with just pride, full merit for any noble and imperial deeds he might have performed. Napoleon's literary labours were of a different character; the former conqueror of mighty nations employed his leisure hours in composing libels against the island authorities, and in dictating the unhappy Memoirs that bear his name; and tell us in the plainest possible language, how little was the man whom fortune had once made so great.

To us Napoleon appears a man of very ordinary talents; improved and strengthened to some extent by an education that gave him a decided advantage over the Republican Generals of his time, and was well calculated to form him for the career in which he was destined to rise. Excessive vanity, however, constituted the main feature of his character, and completely overcame his moderate degree of judgment: it led, as usual, to gross selfishness, and fed that grasping ambition which, springing from no better source, became absolutely boundless, because it was checked and circumscribed by no clear ideas, had no well-defined object beyond the acquisition of power for the mere gratification of a passion "that grew with what it fed upon."

Of firmness and elevation of mind, we consider him to have been as destitute as of high courage, feeling, and generosity. And though the want of *high* courage did not necessarily make him a craven in the battle-field, it certainly paralyzed his powers of action on many important occasions, and left him at last helpless in extremity. The reader will, of course, bear in mind that

there are a thousand different kinds and degrees of bravery, from the high mental and physical valour that smiles in danger stern and wild and stoops in no adversity, down to the lowest degree of physical courage that can give orders within the range of occasionally plunging shot, or advance at the bidding of others with apparent calmness, though with totally confused ideas. On which of these intermediate degrees Napoleon stood, we shall not attempt to decide: certain it is that it was not on a high one.

In like manner, though his want of feeling and generosity never degenerated into the actual ferocity ascribed to the Neroes, Domitians, Caligulas of ancient times, or to the brutal demagogues of the Revolution; the negative virtue of not shedding blood for the mere love of blood, cannot acquit him of ruthless and unyielding cruelty, as his advocates would have us believe. Feeling for the sufferings of others, the mercy which "becomes a king better than his crown," Napoleon never knew; and though maniac ferocity might have exceeded the ruthless actions proved against him, mere callous cruelty never could.

As his total disregard of truth must also be taken into account, we shall allow Von Gagern to show the extent to which it was carried: it is only on the highest authority that credit can be claimed for such statements. "Whatever his qualities may have been," says the German diplomatist, "certain it is, that owing either to a faulty education, or to some natural defect of character, falsehood and deceit formed the principal ingredients of his composition. How often have I heard those who knew him well make use of the words, '*il trompe toujours;*' there is not a day nor an hour, not a moment indeed, in which he does not contemplate deceit or falsehood."

At St Helena he said that "he had been spoilt by early success:" a speech that his advocates have repeated as showing grounds sufficient to atone for his crimes and errors. It may be true that *he* was spoilt, but that cannot alter the case. Men are in many respects the children of circumstances, and we cannot know what in a different position Napoleon would have been; but the nobler metal of the mine is purified and not impaired by fire; and we cannot understand how a really noble character can be injured by prosperity. The ordinary character, too feeble to be chastened by adversity, may shrink beneath its pressure, and the particles of good which, under more favourable circumstances, the sun of prosperity might have ripened and brought to maturity, may turn to corroding bitterness under the visitation of misfortune. But prosperity must expand and ennoble every heart in which the elements of virtue are found in any fair proportion—must produce generous fruit even from the feeblest seeds of generosity; and though success may inflate vanity till it overthrows a moderate degree of judgment, it is only by the aid of that selfish and worth-destroying passion, a passion which acquires mastery over inferior natures alone, that virtue can be corrupted under the influence of good fortune. We often, indeed, see men of whom it is *said* that they have been spoilt by success; but on a close examination, we shall generally find that success has only placed them in positions in which their real propensities can be more freely indulged.

Napoleon had received a good practical education, and success already smiled upon him at a period of life when the heart is still fresh from the hand of nature, has softness to receive and firmness to retain the better impressions it may be capable of deriving from rapid

preferment on the world's most brilliant stage. He attained to command at an age when the power and energy of the mind are already formed and in full vigour, as free from the wavering shallowness of youth as from the fixed unbending pertinacity of age. It seemed as if the Goddess of Fortune had actually exhausted her gifts and efforts to make him great, and was only foiled by the worthlessness of the materials of which he was composed.

> "Great Cæsar on the mountain bred
> A flock of sheep perchance had led;
> He who the world subdued, had been
> But the best wrestler on the green."

Even under a shepherd's garb, the elements of greatness that formed the character of the "first and foremost man of all this world," would have been displayed; but in Napoleon's character we find no such elements, for he remained little in soul when placed upon the loftiest throne modern times had seen: he sank in prosperity, and was infinitely less when hurled with ignominy from his seat of power than when, blest with all that victory could give, he first ascended the curule chair.

A man of brilliant talents would have estimated at their real value the causes that led to his elevation, would not have been blinded by gazing on himself, and ascribed success to his own infallibility; but would have been ennobled in heart and raised in genius by the splendour of his career. Such a man would have used all the efforts of a powerful mind to repay the vast benefits conferred upon him, by acts of charity, generosity and munificence,—by scattering happiness on all that dwelt beneath his sceptre, or within its wide-spread influence. He would have been the messenger of peace rather than

the harbinger of war; like the heathen Titus, he would have mourned every day not marked by deeds of benevolence, and the splendour of his rule would have forced admiring nations to confess that he was fully worthy of his high destiny. But Napoleon acted a different part; and if these volumes contain a faithful history of his career, then are we bound to confirm the words of the poet, and admit with shame and sorrow, that

> "It is enough to grieve the heart,
> To think that God's fair world hath been
> The footstool of a thing so mean."

Painful as the task has been of conducting the reader through the wide field of Asphodels we have had to traverse, painful as it has been to exhibit gallant nations oppressed and trampled beneath the hoofs of vaunting enemies, the earth drenched with the blood of her children, and sorrow and suffering inflicted on the fairest portions of our globe, only to gratify the cravings of worthless ambition; the noble attitude preserved by Britain during this gigantic contest, has still been a source of pride and consolation to an English writer.

Standing foremost in the cause of freedom and the independence of nations, Britain maintained the long and arduous contest through years of good and evil fortune. Ally after ally was struck down, every independent banner was lowered; former friends were forced to league with the oppressor, till from East to West the banded world stood arrayed against the only power that dared to brave the might of Napoleon. But amid the darkening clouds of adversity, the battle of freedom was still maintained in a manner worthy the gallant cause. It was in vain that gathered myriads threatened

our shores, and that fleets traversed distant seas to assail us; equally vain that factions striving for mastery impeded the efforts of patriotism, and that avarice, ever ready to barter honour and the permanent interest of nations for the prospect of momentary gain, joined the same side under the guise of virtue and philanthropy,—the nation, conscious of the noble path in which it was engaged, swerved not from its gallant course.

Mighty armaments, undertaken in ignorance perhaps of just military principles, failed notwithstanding the zeal and bravery of all who were engaged in them, from Generals and Admirals down to the humblest combatants that stept the deck or fought in the ranks. But these reverses, though they overshadowed the land with mourning, could not quell its lofty spirit; and the people, fully alive to what was due to the name and fame of their country, shrunk from no honest sacrifice, and supported with cheerfulness the heavy burdens imposed upon them. And still glory beamed brightly through the gloom of adversity: for though ministers and commanders were often foiled, the sailors and soldiers of Britain remained unconquered; the sun never set on their victorious banners; through the long and dreary contest they remained unvanquished in equal combat, to feel at last the dark ingratitude of the land, their arms had raised to the loftiest pinnacle of greatness and fame.

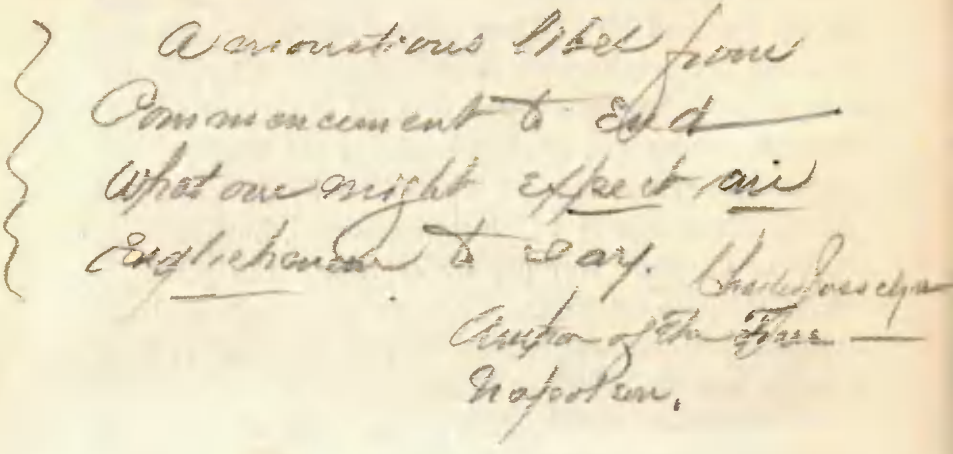
The councils of the nation, if not always guided by the highest ability, were always guided by honour, firmness, and patriotism. All selfish motives were disregarded in this great contest; honour and justice formed the polar star by which the national course was steered, and it was the high character so nobly maintained through every peril, that in the hour of darkness, of almost universal despair, encouraged the oppressed to rally round

the banner of freedom, and ultimately to plant it in triumph on the heights of Montmartre.

But the rich harvest of honour could not be gathered in without exciting a proportionate degree of envy; nor was the gratitude of liberated nations to be of longer duration than human gratitude is usually found to be. Still less could it be expected that those who, with unsparing hand, had rooted out the most frightful system of tyranny and corruption that ever polluted earth, should triumph unassailed by the vile slanders to which falsehood, venality and disappointed avarice resort, when their vocations are arrested, and their efforts laid bare. Britain, the victorious and the generous, the land that in honour's cause had poured out the blood and treasures of her children on every shore, that to consolidate the bonds of peace, had restored colonial empires conquered by her arms, was accused of all the crimes that can be charged against nations; the libellers disgracing not only an age of civilisation by the gross and glaring falsehoods to which they resorted, but insulting every country in Europe, by ascribing the generous efforts made in self-defence, not to patriotism and the hatred of foreign oppression, but to motives of base venality and the influence of English gold.

But the lustre of true glory is as little obscured by the efforts of envy, as the sun's brightness is darkened by the passing clouds formed by the vapours his fiery beams call up from the noxious swamp. The influence of truth is extending daily, and every step of its progress must render more clear and more apparent the noble and disinterested conduct pursued by Britain during this earth-shaking contest. Whether the prophecy of a great poet shall ever be fulfilled, and England sink beneath the sordid power of avarice, is a question beyond the

sphere of our speculation; but should "the land of heroes and the nurse of arms" ever fall from its high estate, and leave like Rome, Greece, and Assyria, only ruins to mark the site where the mighty once dwelt; yet will the glory acquired by a hundred battles fought in defence of the world's freedom,—acquired by boundless sacrifices, by toil, daring and fortitude,—continue to shine spotless and undying through the mist of years, hailed by the wise and the brave, an example to future ages, long after the weeds of desolation shall have covered the graves of those by whom it was achieved.



APPENDIX.

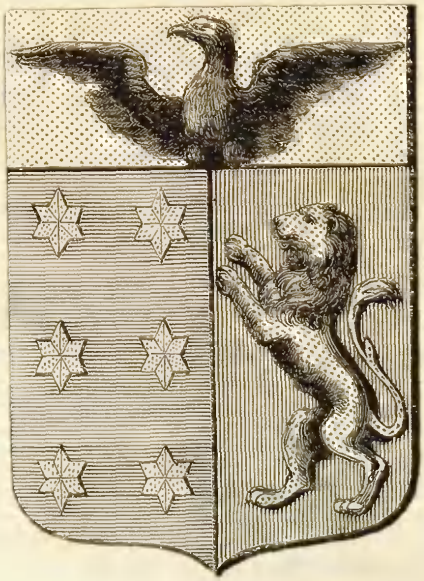
THE FAMILY OF BONAPARTE IN THE BALEARIC ISLANDS.

The information which led the Author of the present Memoir to make inquiries regarding the Bonaparte Family in the Balearic Islands, induced him to believe that they had emigrated from Provence, and were of French extraction. But having lost all trace of his original information, he is unable to verify the point; which is indeed of the slightest possible importance. What may seem strange is, that the Spanish origin of the family, if so we may call a residence of centuries in the Balearic Islands, was unknown during Napoleon's reign, and never claimed by Joseph as a title to the support of his Spanish subjects and countrymen.

"Don Antonio Furio, Member of the Royal Academy of Literature of Barcelona, and of the Society of Archaiology and Fine Arts of Majorca, Corresponding Member of the Friends of the Country of Valencia, and by the nomination of the Illustrious Constitutional Assembly of the City of Palma, Chronologer-General of the Island of Majorca, certifies:—

"That the books and documents to be here quoted, bear

evidence of the origin, rank, dignity, and extinction of the noble Family of Bonaparte in this Island of Majorca. First, in a book preserved in the Archives of the City of Palma, in which are contained the armorial-bearings of the noble Families of the Island, appear those of Bonaparte, which are emblazoned in the following manner:—They bear, dexter, *azure*, with six Stars in pairs, *or;* sinister, *gules*, with a Lion rampart, *or*. The Chief, *or*, with an Eagle saliant, *sable;* as here represented.



"The book already named bears farther evidence to show that the Family of Bonaparte came from Genoa to Majorca, and were always looked upon as belonging to the Equestrian order, and that the members held rank and filled various honourable offices suited to their dignity.

"It is not many years ago since the armorial-bearings here depicted, were to be seen on a monument in the convent of the nuns of St Augustin in this city, as well as on one in front of the church of the monastery of St Geronimo. The same arms are also engraved on the family sepulchre in the cloister of the

convent belonging to the order of St Domingo, and mentioned in the following words in the original register of interments of that convent, formed in the 17th century:—'In the Chapel of Our Lady of Grace of St Blas the Martyr, is the ancient tomb of the Bonapartes, as proved by the armorial-bearings of the family in the said Chapel.'

"From another and more ancient book of interments formed in 1559, and kept in the archives of the above-named convent, the antiquity and nobility of the Bonapartes is also proved. At page 96, and under the title of Graves of Persons of Rank, it is said, 'The Bonapartes have their tomb marked with their shield and armorial-bearings, in the cloister and chapel of Our Lady.'

"Our historians farther attest the nobility of the Bonaparte family, and speak of its distinguished members, among whom is particularly mentioned the learned jurist, Don Hugo Bonaparte, who left this island in 1411, and settled in Corsica, where he became President of the Council. How he came to be inscribed on the Golden Book of France, does not appear.

"The departure of this individual did not, however, occasion the extinction of the Bonapartes in Majorca: for in the History of the Island, written by Don Vincente Mut, and printed at Palma in 1650, it is stated, Book v. page 269, that when the commons rose against the tyrants who governed for the Emperor Charles V., the nobles took part with the sovereign; but finding themselves too weak to contend against their more numerous adversaries, they resolved to apply to the King for a remedy: and one of the subscribers to this petition, made in 1521, was Batista Bonaparte. It is not known whether the family became extinct during the wars of the commons; but in the last chapter of his work, Don Vincente Mut states, that it no longer existed in 1650. 'There have died out,' he says, 'or become extinct, eighty-four equestrian names, though descendants of these houses still exist in other families: they are, the Alberti, Armadeus, Angelats, Archelo, Bertran, Bartomen, Berenguer, Borassa, Bonaparte.' The work of Don Vincente has always been looked upon as containing an accurate register of the noble houses that have become extinct:

and history and our public monuments furnish no farther information on the subject.

"ANTONIO FURIO.

"PALMA, 2*d September* 1842."

As it may interest some of our readers, we here subjoin a sketch of the arms of the Italian branch of the Bonaparte family, as they have been found on monuments at Treviso.

It must be added, however, that other arms, also ascribed to families of the name of Bonaparte, have been discovered in different parts of the country. But none of the statements which claim for the Corsican family an ancient and noble Italian descent, rest upon documents of equal authenticity with those of the Balearic Islands.

THE END.

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